

BLACKWOOD'S ATTITUDE TO GERMAN LITERATURE

AND THOUGHT REFLECTED BY

BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE 1817-1917

WALTER GANTNER

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The undersigned hereby certify that
they have read and recommend to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled
England's Attitude to German Literature and Thought
Reflected by Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine 1817-1917
submitted by Walter Gantner in partial fulfilment of
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SYNOPSIS

During the last few years of the eighteenth century, a number of factors converged to produce in England a period of unprecedented interest in German literature. Goethe's Götz von Berlichingen and Werther, Bürger's Lenore, and the dramas of Iffland and Kotzebue were accorded high praise by critics and public alike. But the enthusiasm was short-lived. In spite of the vigorous pioneering work of such authors as Coleridge, William Taylor of Norwich, and "Monk" Lewis, grave obstacles--such as careless and inaccurate translations and superficial reading stemming from a deficient knowledge of the German language--militated against a true and lasting understanding of German literature. A general reaction, the result of anti-Jacobin fear, against anything foreign was a further instrument in bringing to an end the first period of German influence.

But the alliance of England and Germany against Napoleon in 1813, the publication in the same year of Madame de Staél's De l'Allemagne, and the undaunted activities of Germanophiles like Scott, De Quincey, Lockhart, Gillies, and Carlyle, whose writings reached the broad reading public through a number of new magazines and reviews, all helped to create new interest in Germany and resulted in a period of genuine appreciation of German literature. Thus, with the return of peace in 1815, the second period of German influence can be said to have begun.

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, established in 1817, showed its friendliness to German literature in its very first number by numerous translations from German poets. The Germanophile policy of

the journal was largely due to John Gibson Lockhart and John Wilson, its editors, and to Robert Pearse Gillies who joined its staff in 1819. In addition to a great many German poems and stories that appeared in English versions, a series of reviews entitled "Horae Germanicae," many of which were interspersed with substantial excerpts from the works under discussion, testify to the magazine's desire to propagate interest in German literature. Occasional discussions of German philosophy, music, art, economics, and politics are further illustrations of this aim.

As the century progressed, the initial enthusiasm was dampened by a reaction such as follows any period of heightened activity. But with Germany's rise to political and economical power in the second half of the nineteenth century, Blackwood's kindly interest in things German--now mainly political--returned. This attitude endured until the outbreak of the First World War.

The following study is based on an exhaustive examination of items pertaining to Germany and attempts, by first dealing with the various genres and topics separately, to arrive at an integrated view of Blackwood's attitude to Germany and things German. Furthermore, it undertakes to account for changes in that attitude by taking into consideration political and social factors responsible for them.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ENGLAND'S ATTITUDE TO GERMAN LITERATURE AND THOUGHT
REFLECTED IN BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE 1817-1917

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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FOREWORD

This thesis is an attempt to examine the attitude of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine between 1817 and 1917 towards German literature, and also to German thought, art, and music. The general subject of Anglo-German relations, especially the interest in German literature exhibited in Britain, and the influence exerted by German literature and thought upon English writers, has been investigated from several points of view. In Einfluss der deutschen Literatur auf die englische am Ende des achtzehnten und im ersten Drittel des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1901) by E. Markgraf, in German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788-1818 (London, 1929) by F.W. Stokoe, and in Der Einfluss der deutschen Literatur auf die englische im 19. Jahrhundert (Halle, 1947) by Walter F. Schirmer more or less well-defined periods provide the frame work for the investigation. In other works attention is centered on the reception given to individual German authors. William F. Hauhart's The Reception of Goethe's Faust in England in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1909), Wilhelm Todt's Lessing in England 1767-1850 (Heidelberg, 1912), Frederic Ewen's The Prestige of Schiller in England 1788-1859 (New York, 1932), and Stanton Lawrence Wormley's Heine in England (North Carolina, 1943) constitute important contributions to this field of inquiry.

Although the reception accorded to German literature by the English and American periodical press has been the subject of bibliographical studies such as The Attitude of England and America toward

German Literature of the Mid-Nineteenth Century (Boston, 1935) by
Lillie V. Hathaway and German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860
(Madison, Wisconsin, 1949) edited by B. Q. Morgan and A. R. Hohlfeld,
a specific consideration of the attitude displayed by any one of the
several important literary journals has not been undertaken before. As
Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine was probably the most active periodical
in acquainting the British reader with German life and culture, an
examination of the journal's attitude, and changes in attitude, towards
the subject will add to an understanding of the nature of the reception
of Germany in England during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

I would like to acknowledge the help received from
Dr. Ernest Reinhold who suggested the topic of this thesis and assisted
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INTRODUCTION.

1. Brief Survey of Anglo-German Literary Relations.

In a letter of June 15th, 1828, Goethe wrote to Carlyle: " . . . ich muss wiederholen, dass vielleicht noch nie der Fall eintret, dass eine Nation um die Andere sich so genau umgetan, dass eine Nation an der Anderen so viel Teil genommen, als jetzt die Schottische an der Deutschen."¹ This trend which, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, culminated in a period of mutual admiration, can be said to have begun in the sixteenth century. It would, in fact, be difficult to demonstrate any interest on the part of England in German literature prior to that date. In view of the fact that German literature of the sixteenth century was little better than barbarous--reflecting, as it did, the moral debasement, political disruption, and internal dissension of that period--it is surprising to learn that it had a marked influence on English literature.

Literary relations during that time can be divided into two wholly distinct regions. On the one hand, German literature of the Reformation had an unmistakable, if ephemeral, effect on that of England. In the words of Charles H. Herford, "in lyric, in dialogue, in drama, the imaginative language which the genius of German Protestantism had shaped out for itself was caught up with fitful and momentary energy, and then as rapidly forgotten."² On the other hand, the secular

¹ Correspondence Between Goethe and Carlyle, ed. Charles Eliot Norton (London, 1887), p. 90.

² Charles H. Herford, Studies in Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century, (Cambridge, 1886), p. xxv.

literature of earthy jest and satire had a more permanent effect. Thus, Brent's The Ship of Fools (1494), translated at the beginning of the century, and the stock figures of Faustus, Eulenspiegel, and Grobienus, were quickly incorporated into the English literary tradition.³ Their influence on English satirical and dramatic literature is readily discernible. Christopher Marlowe's famous Tragical History of Doctor Faustus (1588) had, for example, been inspired by Die Historia von Dr. Johann Faust, published anonymously in Frankfurt in 1587.

Except for the so-called travellers--youths of noble German families who, due to the fact that Germany was at that time lacking in educational facilities, considered travel indispensable for the completion of their education,⁴ and way-faring English comedians who introduced into Germany some of the popular dramatic literature of England--literary relations between the two countries were discontinued almost completely in the seventeenth century. This is understandable, for German "poetry of the age lacks vigour, rummages in text-books and fails to find matter. It is pedantic, counts syllables, and imitates foreign fashions. Whatever it touches is turned, not to gold, but to wood. Tame, in-artistic, formless, colourless, it lives a very life."⁵ In spite of this lamentable situation, a very thin thread of interest can be revealed. Gilbert Waterhouse has done this in his attempt

to follow the decline of German influence on England,
to watch the two countries as they drift apart, to

³ Gilbert Waterhouse, Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Seventeenth Century, (Cambridge, 1914), p. vi,--hereafter cited as "Waterhouse."

⁴ W.D. Robson-Scott, German Travellers in England (Oxford, 1953), p. 34.

⁵ Carl Lemke, Geschichte der deutschen Literatur neuerer Zeit, quoted in Waterhouse, pp. xiii.

note that intercourse, although spasmodic, is never completely interrupted, and that finally, towards the end of the century, a connection is established which has continued to increase in strength down to our own time.⁶

During the eighteenth century, German interest in English literature predominated. It began with Ernst Gottlieb von Börge's translation of Milton's Paradise Lost in 1682, and continued with an effusive admiration, particularly on the part of the writers of the Sturm und Drang period, for the works of Prior, Thomson, Pope, Young, Ossian, Percy, Richardson, and, above all, Shakespeare. But hardly any English interest in German literature can be found--at least in the first part of the eighteenth century. There are several reasons for this neglect. In the first place, the vogue of French taste, which, at that time, prevailed throughout Europe, made it difficult for German literature to reassert itself; furthermore, the language barrier, meagre trade relations between the two countries, and the high tariff on books, coupled with the "insularity" of Britain--all these factors constituted obstacles that proved well-nigh insurmountable.⁷

The factors that eventually helped to prepare the way for a gradual appreciation of German literature in England are to be sought in the realm of politics. The mounting political significance of Germany under the leadership of Frederick the Great, and the English alliance with Prussia against the French, as well as the close connection between pietism in Germany and Wesleyanism, its English equivalent, provided a more receptive climate for German literature. Although interest

⁶ Waterhouse, p. xii.

⁷ German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860, eds. B.C. Morgan and A.R. Hohlfeld (Madison, Wisconsin, 1949), p. 51,--hereafter cited as "Morgan and Hohlfeld."

in individual authors can be inferred from the translations which began to appear in the later part of the century--Klopstock's Messias (1748), Cellert's Fabeln und Erzählungen (1754), Lessing's Nathan der Weise (1779), and, of course, Goethe's Werther (1774)--real progress before 1796 was slow.

Just before the turn of the century, however, two authors rose to unprecedented popularity, Gottfried August Bürger and August von Kotzebue. They were almost unanimously acclaimed by critics and public alike. Reasons for the uncritical enthusiasm, with which the poetry of Bürger and the plays of Kotzebue were received in England, must be sought, first, in the nature of the works translated and, second, in the social conditions that prevailed in England at the time. Bürger's primitivistic ballads, full of the most stormy passions, and Kotzebue's dramas, marked by artificial sentimentality, did not fail to satisfy feelings that were aroused over the slave question, or minds that were seeking a new social order.

Critics who a short time ago had been extolling the beauties of French, now declared that "the French language in point of energy is far inferior to our own tongue, and very far beneath the force of the German."⁸

The chief reason for this reaction against the vogue of French literature was fear of extreme liberalism. An active individualistic Protestantism--closely connected with strictness of personal conduct and avowed profession of piety--had been an important

⁸ Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama (London, 1925), p. 312.

element in eighteenth century England, but had then exerted little influence on the Church or on the lives of the privileged classes. But when those classes saw their privileges and possessions threatened by Jacobin doctrines from across the Channel, a sharp revulsion from French "atheism" and "deism" ensued. As latitudinarian opinions in religion became increasingly identified with sedition and lack of patriotism, and as a concurrent change of manners took place, any tendencies deviating in the least from the strict standards of belief were combated, and German "philosophism" became as abhorred as French "Jacobinism." The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine, the mouth piece of the conservative opposition, writes in 1799:

Let us, for God's sake, look with a little more circumspection at the claims of these German philosophers before we so readily admit the value of them; nor suffer the public taste to be vitiated thus, without making one single attempt to expose the absurdity of its seducer. My blood boils with indignation when I see my beloved Shakespeare, Otway, Rove, and all those ornaments of my native country thrust aside to make room for the filthy effusions of this German dunce.⁹

Soon the bitterness turned to open denunciation. A particularly scurrilous attack by the same periodical followed shortly:

It is with an equal portion of surprise and alarm that we witness in this country a glaring depravity of taste, as displayed in the extreme eagerness for foreign productions, and a systematic design to extend such depravity by a regular importation of exotic poison from the envenomed crucibles of the literary and political alchemists of the new German school.¹⁰

⁹ Anti-Jacobin Review, III(1799), in Morgan and Hohlfeld, p. 44.
¹⁰ Ibid., p. 45.

The time for a valid appreciation of German literature had clearly not yet come. Any progress it had made, had been spasmodic and superficial. Some great mediator, possessed with genuine interest and enthusiasm, was unfortunately still lacking. Carlyle, writing thirty years later, summed up the literary situation at the close of the eighteenth century very cogently: "German literature has now for upward of half a century been making some way in England; yet by no means at a constant rate, rather in capricious flux and reflux. . . ." The story of its progress, Carlyle philosophizes, illustrates the fate of anything new:

In a vague, all exaggerating twilight of wonder, the new has to fight its battle with the old; Hope has to settle accounts with Fear; thus the scales strangely waver; public opinion, which is as yet baseless, fluctuates without limit; periods of foolish admiration and foolish execration must elapse before that of true enquiry and zeal according to knowledge can begin.¹¹

Having become associated with the revolutionary spirit in religion, morals, and politics, German literature fell into complete disfavour with the English public. Anti-Jacobin fear of anything foreign and subversive had put a stop to the first period of German influence.

For a few years, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it seemed as though the Germanophiles in England were fighting a losing battle. But not for long. The earlier "Götzism" and "Wertherism" combined to form an influence that proved in the long run more lasting and pervading. If the first period of German influence had been inspired by the spirit of German *Sturm und Drang*, the second was given a more

¹¹ Ibid., p. 50.

permanent stimulus by the spirit of German transcendental thought.

Three writers--Scott, Coleridge, and DeQuincey--were important, though indirect, mediators in the interpretation of German philosophy in England.

Sir Walter Scott, who had translated various works from the German at the close of the eighteenth century, retained his interest for German literature all his life, and inspired others with the same interest. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose translation of Wallenstein (1800) was a work of considerable literary merit, testifies in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817) to the strength with which Kantian transcendentalism had taken possession of him. Had he not abandoned literature for philosophy, he might have done for German literature what Carlyle did later.¹² De Quincey, whose interest in German letters was confined to the prose writers, may be regarded as the first English interpreter of Jean Paul.

The publication in 1813 of Madame de Staél's epoch-making work De l'Allemagne, was also of inestimable importance in stimulating interest in Germany and things German. For the first time, a general interpretation of the meaning of the new German culture as a whole had appeared. Instead of being entirely laudative in attitude, the book managed to retain something of a critical outlook even in its enthusiasm. The completely informal, readable, and interesting study, which presented biographical data, character analyses, and excerpts from the most representative German authors, produced a good deal of excitement in England, and awaked the general consciousness to the merits of the

¹² Ibid., p. 51.

literary productions in Germany.

Other figures of unquestionable importance should not be overlooked. John Gibson Lockhart, who in 1818 translated Friedrich Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature and Ancient and Modern, and Robert Pearse Gillies, whose long series of articles "Horae Germanicæ" appeared in Blackwood's Magazine between 1819 and 1827, will both be considered later in more detail in connection with their extensive contributions to that magazine.

It was, however, in Thomas Carlyle, that German literature had found its greatest interpreter in England. He was a profound admirer of Goethe who, more than any other figure, was his spiritual father. He provided him with the inner experiences which gave new meaning to life, and helped him to attain the affirmative stage--the "Everlasting Yea." The German Romantic philosophers, on the other hand, furnished him with a basis for his thought. In his dissatisfaction with the science of Newton, the epistemology of Locke, the skepticism of Hume, and the ethics of the Utilitarians, he found a congenial *Weltanschauung* in the philosophies of Kant and Fichte. Meanwhile, Schiller's writings were also exerting their influence on him. His Life of Schiller, published in bookform in 1825, was the first full-length English biography of a German literary figure in the nineteenth century. Simultaneously, he worked on a translation of Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre which was published in 1824. These two works were followed in 1825-26 by four volumes of Specimens of German Romance, each of which was prefaced with a biographical and critical introduction. Although Carlyle's knowledge of German was, in a large measure, self-taught, he had an almost uncanny

ability to render the subtleties of the German language into English.

A great admirer of Germany and things German, he never tired of defending German policies. In 1871, in a letter to the Times, he approved Prussia's annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and contrasted "noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany" with "vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and oversensitive France."¹³ Very much the same attitude can be seen in his unfinished History of German Literature which, except for a few excerpts that appeared as reviews in various magazines, remained unpublished. In it Carlyle aimed at examining that "almost untouched subject."

On all hands it begins to be understood that the Germans as a Literary Nation stand on a deep and quite independent basis; that their Literature alone of all existing Literatures, has still some claim to that ancient 'inspired gift,' which alone is poetry; that it is not only a clear melodious Echo of the present Time, but also a prophecy of a new and better Time, traces . . . already lie revealed there.¹⁴

2. The Nineteenth-Century Literary Periodicals.

More than any single factor, however, it was the new magazines and reviews, which played the greatest part in the shaping of an audience for German literature in England. They performed a diversity of functions in the social, literary, and political life of the nation. Above all, they were instrumental in creating a wide reading public, making it at once receptive and critical. Furthermore, they articulated, defined, and, in a considerable measure, shaped public opinion on matters of

¹³ S. C. Chew, The Nineteenth Century and After (New York, 1948), p. 131⁴.

¹⁴ Carlyle's Unfinished History of German Literature, ed. Hill Shine (Lexington, 1951), p. xii.

literature, taste, politics, and morality. As far as German literature was concerned, the Edinburgh Review(1802), the Quarterly Review(1802), the London Magazine(1820), the Westminster Review(1825), the Foreign Quarterly Review(1827), and the Foreign Review(1828), did much to make it known in England. But it was Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, established in 1817, which was "perhaps the most helpful of all British magazines in the introduction of German literature."¹⁵

Before 1817 the chief opponent of the Whiggish Edinburgh Review was the Quarterly Review. Realizing that it was altogether "too sober, dignified, and middle-aged," William Blackwood, a confirmed Tory, felt the need for "something not so ponderous, more nimble, more frequent, more familiar."¹⁶ And, on April 1, 1817, under the joint editorship of Cleghorn and Pringle, the first number of the Edinburgh Monthly Magazine was published. But, at first, things went rather badly. The editors were not of the right calibre and Blackwood dismissed them. He secured the services of John Wilson and John Gibson Lockhart, two young men who were ideal for the editorship. The poet James Hogg, a shepherd's son who was later to become known as "The Ettrick Shepherd," joined the planning for the new version of the magazine which, henceforth, was to call itself simply Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. On October 21, 1817, the notorious seventh number was released on an unsuspecting public. It contained the celebrated "Chaldee Manuscript"--a biblical parody which subjected to ridicule the entire staff of the Edinburgh Review, as well as a gratuitous attack on Coleridge and his Literaria Biographia--

¹⁵ Morgan and Hohlfeld, p. 116.

¹⁶ Mrs. Oliphant, William Blackwood and Sons (Edinburgh, 1897), I, 97.

which struck the key-note of the entire periodical. It was brilliant, daringly personal, and cruelly satirical; sparing neither eminence nor insignificance.

The flippancy and rashness were characteristic of the magazine for many years; but gradually Lockhart's behaviour became more seemly and the journal's manner more restrained. In 1818, another young man joined the staff of Blackwood's. William Maginn, who wrote from Dublin, contributed stories full of wit and gaiety which blended singularly well with the rest of the magazine. One of the first contributors was Robert Pearse Gillies, whom Carlyle called "a great German scholar,"¹⁷ and whose reviews and translations from the German introduced many a German author into England. In 1826, when he found himself in serious financial difficulties, Sir Walter Scott gave him the idea to extricate himself from his financial troubles by trying to found a literary periodical which should bring essays about foreign literature and translations of foreign works. In his letter to Gillies, Scott said that he thought him "eminently qualified for such a task" and also that he believed an income, large enough to keep him out of trouble, could be made out of it.¹⁸ Thus, in 1827, Gillies left the staff of Blackwood's to devote himself to the editorship of the Foreign Quarterly Review, which soon proved to be a great success in London.¹⁹

¹⁷ Walter F. Schirmer, Der Einfluss der deutschen Literatur auf die englische im 19. Jahrhundert (Halle, 1947), p. 35,--hereafter cited as "Schirmer."

¹⁸ Paul Girardin, Robert Pearse Gillies and the Propagation of German Literature in England at the End of the XVIII and the Beginning of the XIX Century (diss. Bonn, 1914), p. 48.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

Although a good deal of Blackwood's interest in German literature --especially with regard to the drama--left the magazine with Gillies, its policy remained, on the whole, Germanophile throughout the century.

CHAPTER I

LITERATURE

1. Poetry

A brief prefatory examination of the Victorian poetic theory, such as it emerges in rough outlines from the body of critical writing of the time, will cast valuable light on the English attitude towards German poetry, and, more specifically, on the ways in which this attitude manifests itself in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. It will, furthermore, clarify seemingly baffling contradictions, and give coherence and direction to the subsequent study.

In England the nineteenth century was a period of doctrinal doubt and spiritual anguish. This mood is reflected not only in the poetry of the time, but also in the views which were held concerning the nature and function of poetry. In the absence of a clearly recognized authority, critical opinion, more and more, tended to lose order and homogeneity, and to sink to the level of personal predilection and subjective fault-finding. Two central ideas of Victorian poetic theory, to which most critics of the time have subscribed, can however be discerned.

The first of these stems directly from the growth of science and the mechanistic view of life which was generally held at the time. "Poetry," it was claimed, "is a science with ascertainable laws, which, if correctly formulated, will be universally valid in the sense in which the laws of science are valid."¹ The London Quarterly Review

¹ Alba H. Warren, English Poetic Theory 1825-1865 (Princeton, 1950), p. 6,--hereafter cited as "Warren."

elaborated on this idea: "It is a mistake to define poetry merely as an art. It is such only in the endless instances of its application to practice. But in its dependence upon principles of human nature, rather than upon rules,--in its existence antecedent to, not springing from, experience,--it partakes of the nature of science."² Even more emphasis was placed by the Victorian critics on the idea of the moral function of art. Poetry--in order to have any *raison d'être* at all--had to teach and ennoble. John Stuart Mill put the matter bluntly when he said: "Science is a collection of truths; art, a body of rules, or directions for conduct."³ Others were more vague. What they wanted was not didactic poetry, but poetry which taught moral truths indirectly through an inspired expression of noble characters and actions, poetry which ministered to the minds and souls of men, poetry which was, to use Mill's phrase, a "medicine" to distressed individuals.⁴ Newman, for example, asked that poetry provide "a solace for a mind broken by the disappointments and sufferings of actual life."⁵ And Keble regarded poetry as "a kind of medicine divinely bestowed upon man: which gives healing relief to secret mental emotion, yet rules it with order and due control."⁶ It is clear that, reduced to such a level, poetry was no more than the hand-maiden of religion. As Alba Warren has pointed out, there was a curious

² London Quarterly Review, II(1854), 440-41, quoted in W.A. Jamison, Arnold and the Romantics (Copenhagen, 1958), p.10,--hereafter cited as "Jamison".

³ London and Westminster Review, IV(1836), 3, quoted in Jamison, p. 10.

⁴ Autobiography of John Stuart Mill (New York, 1944), p. 105.

⁵ Poetry, with Reference to Aristotle's Poetics, ed. Albert S. Cook (Boston, 1891), p. 10.

⁶ E.S. Dallas, Poetics: an Essay on Poetry (London, 1852), p. 63.

paradox in Victorian criticism:

There is a strange ambivalence in the Early Victorian judgment: it sanctioned prophecy and revelation but required that they conform to law and fact; it applauded individual expression but was likely to label the personal statement eccentric; its affinities were all subjectivist but it longed for objectivity; and while its prime test was feeling, it was quick to point out the absence of idea and moral.⁷

Matthew Arnold, the greatest critic the age has produced, assimilated the views of his time and restated them in a more consistent and coherent form. Agreeing that poetry should teach moral truth, and thus perform a religious function, he insisted that it be more than rhymed philosophy. Although he would have agreed with Coleridge's remark that "No man was ever yet a great poet, without being at the same time a profound philosopher,"⁸ he demanded, nevertheless, that the philosophic content of a poem be transmuted into concrete poetic experience.

Schirmer regards these and similar critical attitudes as a peculiarly English phenomenon which extends from the early nineteenth century into our own time:

Es geht ja eine gerade Linie von Carlyles moralischer Bewertung Goethes, aus dem er sich menschliche und metaphysische Sicherheit holte, über M. Arnolds Forderung, dass die Dichtung ein "criticism of life" geben müsse, bis hin zu T.S. Eliot und selbst W.S. Maugham, der in seiner autobiographischen Zusammenfassung betont: "art, if it is to be reckoned as one of the great values of life, must teach men humility, tolerance, wisdom, and magnanimity. The value of art is not beauty, but right action."⁹

⁷ Warren, p. 210.

⁸ Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (Oxford, 1907), II, 19.

⁹ Schirmer, p. 3.

It is therefore not surprising to find that it was "philosophy" the nineteenth century English reader looked for in German poetry, and that the influence which German poetry exerted upon the English writers was philosophical, rather than aesthetic. If, then German poetry was held in particularly high regard--and, indeed, it was--this was largely due to its philosophic and moralizing content. According to the evidence in Blackwood's, the German ballad was, characteristically, the most popular form of German poetry with the English reading public. Glorifying, as it did, the ideals of love, friendship, faithfulness, honour, devotion, etc., and summarizing unequivocally the morals to be drawn from it, this genre was particularly dear to Victorian souls, always eager to be ennobled. Thus, in the preface to the Poems and Ballads of Schiller, which appeared in book-form in 1844, Bulwer Lytton subordinates Schiller, the playwright, to the poet, and the poet, to the writer of ballads. "These are his greatest, though simplest, poetical productions," he rhapsodizes, and, without further qualification, asserts that "of these, The Diver is the sublimest ballad in the world."¹⁰

While German poetry, on the whole, was well represented in Blackwood's throughout the entire century, with a gradual decline of interest being noticeable only when the century was drawing to a close, there can be no doubt that Schiller was the most popular of all the German poets who appeared in that journal. After a somewhat slow start, his reputation grew steadily from 1829 on, reaching its high point,

¹⁰ Quoted in Frederick Ewen, The Prestige of Schiller in England (New York 1932), p. 201.

in 1842-43, with the publication of nine instalments of Edward Bulwer Lytton's translation of The Poems and Ballads of Schiller. Then, there was a gradual waning of interest until Sir Theodore Martin published some of his translations in the late eighties.

In 1813, with the publication of Madame de Staël's De l'Allemagne, the older notion, based largely on the dramas of his first period, that Schiller was an "untutored," vehement genius, had given way to a new vision: "Schiller was the minister of high idealism, a philosophical thinker of amplitude, and, what is perhaps more important, an impeccable character. In short Schiller was nature's nobleman."¹¹ By 1817, when Blackwood's was established, the "legend" of Schiller was already in the making.

By stressing the lyrical production of Schiller, particularly the ballads, and the dramas of his third period, which will be examined later, contributors to Blackwood's did not give the journal's readers a balanced view of the German author, but one which they could appreciate and which was consonant with their concept of the function of poetry. They could applaud the philosophy contained in "Das Ideal und das Leben," which upholds constant striving for a high idealism, rejecting the surrender to sensual existence, and affirm the various ethical demands--friendship, moderation, self-conquest,--which are the subjects of several of the ballads. Here and elsewhere in Schiller's work, the Kantian substratum particularly appealed to the British reader who had early in the century accepted Kant almost without reservation.¹²

¹¹ Ewen, p. xii.

¹² See René Wellek, Kant in England 1793-1838 (Princeton, N.Y., 1931).

In spite of Schiller's popularity, the early translations of his poems are quite inadequate. Their predominant roughness and textual inaccuracies testify to a deficient knowledge of German and a lack of experience on the part of the translators. The three poems which appeared in 1818 are "Kassandra," "Die Kindesmörderin," and "Klage der Ceres." Here are characteristic examples:

Cassandra.

Joy was heard in Ilium's walls,
Ere her lofty turrets fell,--
Songs of jubilee filled her halls,
Warbled from the golden shell.
Rests each warrior's weary sword
From the work of blood and slaughter;
While Pelides, conquering lord,
Sought the hand of Priam's daughter.¹³

Freude war in Trojas Hallen,
Eh' die hohe Feste fiel,
Jubelhymnen hört man schallen
In der Saiten goldnes Spiel.
Alle Hände ruhen müde
Von dem tränenvollen Streit,
Weil der herrliche Pelide
Priams schöne Tochter freit.¹⁴

The Murderess.

Hark! is not that the clock's dull sound,
That tells my journey must be trod?
Look there! the hand has moved its round,
On, headsman, in the name of God.
Receive, fond world, this last, last tear;
This sigh for raptures that are o'er;
Thy magic gifts, alas! were dear,--
Enchantress, they shall charm no more.¹⁵

¹³ Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, III(1818), 153.

¹⁴ Schillers Werke, ed. Ludwig Bellermann (Leipzig, 1895), I 289,--
hereafter cited as Schillers Werke.

¹⁵ Blackwood's, III(1818), 418.

Horch--die Glocken hallen dumpf zusammen,
Und der Zeiger hat vollbracht den Lauf.
Nun, so sei's denn!--Nun, in Gottes Namen!
Grabgefährten, brecht zum Richtplatz auf!
Nimm, o Welt, die letzten Abschiedsküsse!
Diese Tränen nimm, o Welt, noch hin!
Deine Gifte--o, sie schmeckten süsse!¹⁶
Wir sind quitt, du Herzvergifterin.

Such faulty renderings, as "Saiten" into "golden shells" and "tränen-vollen Streit" into "work of blood and slaughter," in the first poem, and actual mistranslations--"Deine Gifte" into "Thy magic gifts"--in the second, tend not only to diffuse the poems, but to falsify their meanings. Thus, the mood of calm resignation of the first stanza of "Die Kindesmörderin" has been watered down by the translator to a prosy sentimentality that is quite misleading. The translation of the third poem, "Klage der Ceres," is not much better:

Now the kindly Spring appears,
The earth exults in youth again--
Each sunny hill its green slope rears,
And bursts each stream its icy chain;
See Jove looks down, and smiles serene
O'er its blue and glassy bosom;
Mild the Zephyr waves his wing,
And spreads to air the op'ning blossom.¹⁷

Ist der holde Lenz erschienen?
Hat die Erde sich verjüngt?
Die besonnten Hügel grünen,
Und des Eises Rinde springt.
Aus der Ströme blauem Spiegel
Lacht der unbewölkte Zeus,
Milder wehen Zephyrs Flügel,¹⁸
Augen treibt das junge Reis.

¹⁶ Schillers Werke, I, 24.

¹⁷ Blackwood's, IV(1818), 161.

¹⁸ Schillers Werke, I, 144.

Along with the remarkable bit of animistic imagery--"Each sunny hill his green slope rears"--which quite obliterates the simple line of the original, and the baffling last line, this version has more serious shortcomings. It fails to convey the note of hesitation and doubt which is sounded in the opening lines of the original; what, in Schiller's poem, is apprehensively questioned, is presented in the translation as an accomplished, incontrovertible fact.

In the subsequent years, there were even fewer references to Schiller. Only four translations appeared between 1819 and 1829. "Die Begegnung," which was published as "The Interview" in 1819, is, on the whole, a successful attempt at rendering Schiller's poem into English.

I see her yet amidst her lovely train,
As there, the loviest of them all, she stood;
Her sun-like beauty struck the glance with pain,
I stood aloof, irresolute, subdued,
A pleasing shudder thrilled each beating vein,
Awed by the circling loveliness I viewed;
But all at once, as on resistless wing,
An impulse came and bade me strike the string.¹⁹

Noch seh' ich sie, umringt von ihren Frauen,
Die herrlichste von allen stand sie da;
Wie eine Sonne war sie anzuschauen,
Ich stand von fern und wagte mich nicht nah'.
Es fasste mich mit wollustvollem Grausen,
Als ich den Glanz vor mir verbreitet sah;
Doch schnell, als hätten Flügel mich getragen,
Ergriff es mich, die Saiten anzuschlagen.²⁰

The third line, to be sure, misrepresents Schiller's meaning, and "the circling loveliness I viewed" is a somewhat vague rendition of

¹⁹ Blackwood's, IX(1821), 344.

²⁰ Schillers Werke, I, 183.

"den Glanz vor mir verbreitet sah;" but, except for such minor weaknesses, the English version, while managing to stay quite close to the original, is natural and readable. The same cannot, however, be said of the next ballad which appeared in 1821. In fact, it is difficult even to recognize the "Handschuh" in this prosy retelling of the story. The last lines illustrate particularly well the way in which the anonymous translator has emasculated the original:

The Lady Cunigund, the while,
Radiant with vain delight,
To receive her knight,
Gets ready her softest, sweetest smile;--
But not to him 'tis sweet!
So,
Bowing low,
He lays the glove at her feet,
Then, bowing lower,
Turns on his heel, and never looks upon her more!²¹

Aber mit zärtlichem Liebesblick--
Er verheisst ihm sein nahes Glück--
Empfängt ihn Fräulein Kunigunde.
Und er wirft ihr den Handschuh ins Gesicht:
"Den Denk, Dame, begehr' ich nicht!"²²
Und verlässt sie zur selben Stunde.

In 1829, two of Schiller's poems were published--"Ritter Toggenburg" and "Der Taucher." This first translation of "Der Taucher" is particularly ineffective. It is interesting to trace the progressive improvement by comparing it with the two other versions which followed. Here, first of all, is the original:

Wer wagt es, Rittersmann oder Knapp',
Zu tauchen in diesen Schlund?
Einen goldnen Becher werf' ich hinab,
Verschlungen schon hat ihn der schwarze Mund.

²¹ Blackwood's, IX(1821), 344.

²² Schillers Werke, I, 198.

Wer mir den Becher kann wieder zeigen,²³
Er mag ihn behalten, er ist sein eigen.

The translator of 1829 offered this version:

Where is the knight or the vassal so brave,
To dive in the gulf below,
When into its black and devouring wave
This golden goblet I throw?
Who brings that goblet again to me,
Let him have it, and hold it, for his it shall be.²⁴

The Reverend James White, who translated it in 1838, tried to improve upon it by aiming at literalness. He did not achieve this, however, without violating English syntax to an unpardonable extent:

Who dares, whether knight or squire, to spring
This wild abyss within?
A golden cup in the gulf I fling--
How quick its black maw has sucked it in!
Whoever the cup will show to me,
He may keep it. His own shall the goblet be.²⁵

Bulwer Lytton's translation is doubtless the most successful attempt. While sacrificing some of the faithfulness of White's translation, he achieved a happy compromise. Without essentially distorting Schiller's meaning, he still managed to sound poetic and unforced.

Oh, where is the knight or the squire so bold,
As to dive to the howling charybdis below?--
I cast in the whirlpool a goblet of gold,
And o'er it already the dark waters flow;
Whoever to me may the goblet bring,
Shall have for his guerdon that gift of his king.²⁶

This last version is part of the series Poems and Ballads of Schiller which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine between 1842 and 1843.

²³ Ibid., p. 191.

²⁴ Blackwood's, XXV(1829), 778.

²⁵ Blackwood's, XLIII(1838), 725.

²⁶ Blackwood's, LII(1842), 286.

Bulwer Lytton, who since 1840 had done considerable travelling on the Continent, and whose admiration for Schiller had constantly increased, had undertaken the difficult task of translating the poems. In a brief but eloquent preface to the series, he declares that it is Schiller's poetry rather than that of Goethe which arouses the sympathy and popular appreciation of Englishmen. "In his richness, Schiller is simple; in his simplicity, he is not vulgar; in his sentiment he is manly; and in his philosophy, he is broad and large." Although it must be confessed that in his earlier work he was wild, impetuous, and "more German," Bulwer Lytton goes on to point out that his later development reveals him as simpler, more natural, "more English." For Schiller is a poet, whom "not the cant of cliques and critics--but the Heart of Man and Voice of the Time proclaim to be really G R E A T."²⁷

The Poems and Ballads of Schiller appeared in book form in 1844 with a long critical analysis by the translator. This is the most significant comment upon the poet since 1823, when Carlyle's Life of Schiller was published. But there is a characteristic shift of emphasis. Whereas Carlyle had asserted the primacy of the dramatist, Bulwer Lytton believed that Schiller was "on the whole, greater as a poet than a dramatist."²⁸ In his assessment of Schiller, Bulwer Lytton revealed himself as a true son of his age. Rather than an artist, he saw in Schiller, first and foremost, a great religious reformer, whose mission and gospel it was to "increase, to widen, and to sanctify the reverend

²⁷ E. Bulwer Lytton, "The Poems and Ballads of Schiller I," Blackwood's, LII(1842), 286.

²⁸ Quoted in Ewen, p. 202.

disposition that inclines to Faith.²⁹ In the fulfilment of this mission, he was successful as no writer "simply theological" had ever been: "What holy meditation was to the saints of old, the ideal of aesthetic art was to the creed of Schiller. Therefore, his philosophy, in strict accordance with his poetry, was designed not so much to convince as to ennoble; it addresses the soul rather than the understanding."³⁰ Yet Schiller himself attained the high existence of which he dreamed, Bulwer Lytton asserted. He became "pure form, the archetype, the Gestalt, that he has described in his poem of the 'Ideal and the Actual.'"³¹ And in his poetry, there is to be found a "great and forcible intellect ever appealing to the best feelings, exalting, edifying, and strengthening man in his struggle, uniting with a golden chain the outer world and the inner to the Celestial Throne."³¹

It is clear, that an interpretation which saw in Schiller no more than a religious leader is guilty of gross misrepresentation. For, if there is one thing Schiller was not, it is an orthodox Christian. One need only look at a poem like "Die Götter Griechenlands" to realize that a man who mourned in such passionate tones the destruction of a pagan world was not a conventional Christian, such as Bulwer Lytton wanted to perpetuate him.

Schöne Welt, wo bist du? Kehre wieder,
Holdes Blütenalter der Natur! . . .

Alle jene Blüten sind gefallen
Von des Nordes schauerlichem Wehn;
Einen zu bereichern unter allen,
Musste diese Götterwelt vergehn . . .

²⁹ Ibid., p. 203.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 203.

³¹ Ibid., p. 204.

Ja, sie kehren heim, und alles Schöne,
Alles Hohe nahmen sie mit fort,
Alle Farben, alle Lebenstöne,
Und uns blieb nur das entseelte Wort.³²

But for all his shortcomings as a literary critic, which he shared, after all, with his age, Bulwer Lytton's contribution should not be disparaged. If he overstressed Schiller's "moral earnestness," he was not blinded by it to the merits of his poetry. Above all, however, it was as a translator that he was of the greatest value. His renditions of Schiller's poems are vastly superior to the usual product of the time. A comparison of his version of "Die Kraniche des Ibykus" with one that appeared in 1835, will well illustrate this.

From Rhegium to the Isthmus, long
Hallowed to steeds and glorious song--
Where, link'd awhile in holy peace,
Meet all the sons of martial Greece--
Wends Ibycus--whose lips the sweet
And ever-young Apollo fires;
The staff supports the wanderer's feet--
The God the poet's soul inspires!

And here is the earlier version:

To Corinth, where the sons of Greece
Forget their strifes in festal peace,
Went Ibycus the Games to see
And win the wreath of poesy!
Him gave the Muse the honey'd song
That from his mouth so sweetly flows;
From Rhegium, on lightsome staff,
Full of the god the poet goes.³³

Zum Kampf der Wagen und Gesänge,
Der auf Korinthus' Landesenge
Der Griechen Stämme froh vereint,
Zog Ibykus, der Götterfreund.
Ihm schenkte des Gesanges Gabe,
Der Lieder süßen Mund Apoll;

³² Schillers Werke, I, 68.

³³ Blackwood's, LII(1842), 287.

³⁴ Blackwood's, XXXVIII(1835), 302.

So wandert' er an leichtem Stabe
Aus Rhegium, des Gottes voll.³⁵

Although the earlier version tries to be more literal, it is less successful, for it becomes entangled in inversions and awkward constructions that make it quite unreadable. Furthermore, "whose lips the sweet and ever-young Apollo fires" is much better than the saccharine image of "the honey'd song that from his mouth so sweetly flows."

In the second part of the century, it was Sir Theodore Martin who translated, along with others, many of Schiller's poems. "Das Lied von der Glocke," "Der Handschuh," "Hero und Leander," "Der Ring des Polykrates," and others were published between 1887 and 1889. The opening lines of his translation of "Das Lied von der Glocke" are given here as an example of Martin's work. Whereas the first few verses are easy and natural, the last two lines of the excerpt are wooden and contrived to an unpardonable extent.

Firmly walled up in the earth
The mould is set of well-burnt clay;
To-day the Bell must have its birth!
Then bustle, lads! To work, away!
Hotly from the brow
The sweat must trickle now,
If the work is to sound the master's praise,³⁶
But the blessing it comes from above always.

Fest gemauert in der Erden
Steht die Form, aus Lehm gebrannt.
Heute muss die Glocke werden,
Frisch, Gesellen, seid zur Hand!
Von der Stirne heiss
Rinnen muss der Schweiß,
Soll das Werk den Meister loben;
Doch der Segen kommt von oben.³⁷

35 Schillers Werke, I, 205.

36 Blackwood's, CXLI(1887), 579.

37 Schillers Werke, I, 245.

In 1873, in the series "A Century of Great Poets," Blackwood's published a twenty-four page portrait of the poet which expresses the special affection which the English reading public has had for Schiller. One statement the anonymous critic makes sums up the whole attitude: In contrast to Goethe, "Schiller stands upon no smiling grand elevation of superiority: he stands among the men and women whom he pictures, sympathizing with them . . .".³⁸ In an age which tended to judge a poet's work according to the kind of life he, personally, led--an artist had to be a living example, as it were, of his art,--Schiller was whole-heartedly admired. He was a figure, whom the English reader of poetry could emulate without reservation. There was nothing in his work, nor in his life, which was in any way objectionable. The greatest part of the essay was given over to a detailed account of the poet's life.

Goethe had been discussed in an article, which was published in the same series one year earlier, in the December issue of 1872. In its ambivalent attitude to the poet, the essay is characteristic not only of Blackwood's view of Goethe, but of the Victorian view of German literature. The writer sets out by asserting the undisputed greatness of Goethe. "There is no poetic name," he says, "within the last hundred years which has won a higher place than that of Goethe--we might say, indeed, and with some truth, has won so high a place." Then, he goes on to deplore the fact that so few English readers know Goethe "in anything but the most superficial and accidental way".³⁹ But in spite of

³⁸ Anon., "A Century of Great Poets," Blackwood's, CXIV(1873), 183.

³⁹ Anon., "A Century of Great Poets," Blackwood's, CXII(1872), 675.

his genius, the writer of the essay feels, there is a certain "repugnance" about Goethe. He accounts for this "repugnance which many readers, even when unable to resist the magic of his genius, feel towards Goethe" by asserting that there is something "inhuman in his greatness. He was as inhuman as Jove or Apollo were inhuman. It is not as a man, but as a demi-god raised above man in a smooth and grand completeness, that we regard him."⁴⁰ But his inhuman greatness is not the only reason for the "repugnance" he arouses. Goethe somehow fails to conform to the Victorian idea of a poet, he is "fashioned so unlike most of our ideas of what a poet should be"--and here the writer is commenting on his own age--that he defies classification. In an article on the "New German School of Tragedy," which appeared in 1825, Sarah Austin had criticised Goethe for being "a reprehensibly dangerous writer," but now the charge becomes more specific. This writer holds that Goethe "offends."

Goethe offends a thousand times more deeply than Wordsworth ever did, since man, not to say woman, is his primer and spelling-book, and the years of his curriculum are marked by so many suckled oranges in the shape of loves and friendships from which he had taken all the sweetness that was in them ere he passed upon his triumphant way. This is his sin against humanity--the sin which we cannot pardon him; which neither genius nor success, nor even benevolence, graciousness, and charity, can make up for.⁴¹

It is not surprising that the picture of Goethe who, "having exploited another human soul, puts it aside because he has got all he can out of it, and it is useful to him no more," clashed with the Victorian conception of the "true poet" who was, at best, a seer or prophet with

⁴⁰ Ibid., 676.

⁴¹ Ibid., 680.

the insight of genius and, at worst, a kind of moral philosopher.

For all these drawbacks, Goethe's ballads and lyrics appeared frequently in the pages of Blackwood's. The very first issue carried a translation of "Der Fischer."

The sea-wave falls--the sea-wave flows;
On lonely rock the fisher lies,
In clear cool stream his hook he throws,
And views the bait with wistful eyes;
And as his silent task he plies,
Behold! the floods apart are flung,--
And where the circle eddies rise, 42
A Mermaid's form has upward sprung.

Das Wasser rauscht', das Wasser schwoll,
Ein Fischer sass daran,
Sah nach dem Angel ruhevoll,
Kühl bis ans Herz hinan.
Und wie er sitzt und wie er lauscht,
Teilt sich die Flut empor;
Aus dem bewegten Wasser rauscht
Ein feuchtes Weib hervor. 43

In addition to being weak and diffuse--"a Mermaid's form has upward sprung" has, for example, none of the vivid quality of the original image--the translation is characterized by awkward constructions. It might be of interest to compare this early version with one from the year 1844. Beginning in that year, "Poems and Ballads of Goethe" appeared in Blackwood's, in a translation by Martin and Aytoun. These translations were greatly superior to any that had been published before.

The water rush'd and babbled by--
An angler near it lay,
And watched his quill with tranquil eye,
Upon the current play.
And as he sits in wasteful dream,
He sees the flood unclose,
And from the middle of the stream
A river-maiden rose. 44

⁴² Blackwood's, I(1817), 171.

⁴³ Goethe's Poems, ed. C. W. Eastman (New York, 1941), p.57--hereafter cited as Goethe's Poems.

⁴⁴ Blackwood's, LVI(1844), 54.

In this translation, one feels that the words are not there simply to fill out lines, but to render the essential imagery of the poem.

Among the poems that appeared in the first part of the century are "Die Freuden" (1819), "Die Braut von Korinth" (1819), "Mignon" (1833), and "Der Zauberlehrling" (1838). The translations, all of which are anonymous, are more or less mediocre. "Die Freuden," translated as "Our Joys," is an exception. Here the translation does manage to convey a good deal of the lightness and capriciousness of the original:

There fluttered round the spring
A fly of filmy wing,
Libella, lightly ranging,
Long had she pleased my sight,
From dark to lovely bright,
Like the chameleon, changing:
Red, blue, and green,
Soon lost as seen--
Oh! that I had her near, and knew
Her real changeless hue!⁴⁵

Da flattert um die Quelle
Die wechselnde Libelle,
Der Wasserpapillon,
Bald dunkel und bald helle,
Wie ein Chamäleon;
Bald rot und blau, bald blau und grün.
O dass ich in der Nähe ⁴⁶
Doch seine Farben sähe!

In the last two lines, the translator expresses an idea that is nowhere even implied in the original, and thus shifts the theme of the entire stanza. The translator of "Mignon," on the other hand, takes no such liberties. He is content to render the German words almost too literally:

Know you the land where the Lemon-tree blows,
In dark leaves embowered the gold Orange glows;
The wind breathes softly from the deep-blue sky;
Still is the Myrtle and the Laurel high;--
Know'st thou it?⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Blackwood's, IV(1819), 404.

⁴⁶ Goethe's Poems, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Blackwood's, XXXIII(1833), 90.

Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühn,
Im dunklen Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht--
Kennst du es wohl?⁴⁸

Even though the word order is not quite flawless--as in the first line, for example--the imagery is quite appropriate and in keeping with the original.

Returning to the "Poems and Ballads of Goethe," mentioned above, two particularly felicitous renditions should be singled out. In their contrasting moods, the translations of "Wanderers Nachtlied" and "Willkommen und Abschied" will illustrate Sir Theodore Martin's skill as a translator. As all of his translations, they are marked by a lack of servility to the originals.

Peace breathes along the shade
Of every hill,
The tree-tops of the glade
Are hushed and still;
All woodland murmurs cease,
The birds to rest within the brake are gone.
be patient, weary heart--anon.⁴⁹
Thou, too, shalt be at peace.

Über allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürst du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vöglein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde.⁵⁰
Ruhest du auch.

To horse!--away o'er hill and steep!
Into the saddle blithe I sprung;
The eve was cradling earth to sleep,
And night upon the mountains hung.

⁴⁸ Goethe's Poems, 46.

⁴⁹ Blackwood's, LVI(1844), 54.

⁵⁰ Goethe's Poems, p. 44.

With robes of mist around him set,
The oak like some huge giant stood,
While, with his hundred eyes of jet,
Peered darkness from the tangled wood.⁵¹

Es schlug mein Herz: geschwind zu Pferde!
Es war getan fast eh' gedacht.
Der Abend wiegte schon die Erde,
Und an den Bergen hing die Nacht;
Schon stand im Nebelkleid die Eiche,
Ein aufgetürmter Riese, da,
Wo Finsternis aus dem Gesträuche
Mit hundert schwarzen Augen sah.⁵²

The images are concrete and in sharp focus, and--although the rendering is rather free--admirably succeed in conveying the mood and spirit of the original versions.

In the latter half of the century, only one poem by Goethe appeared in Blackwood's, and it, one might conjecture, not so much because it was by Goethe, but because it suited the season. Translated by Peter Bayne, "Mailied" was included in the May number of 1890.⁵³ Thus, it seems to have been Goethe's fate already in the nineteenth century, to be admired rather than read; but no one denied his greatness. In 1872, a critic wrote a veritable apotheosis of the poet.

He has been the originator of schools of poetry with which he himself was scarcely connected. He has given the divine stimulus of awakening life to more than one mind almost as great as his own, and all this independent of the mass of noble poetry which in his own person he has bestowed upon the world. But with all he stands among us in a beauty scarcely human, smiling that smile of the superior which is alien to genius,--a great being who watches us, pities us, tolerates us, pierces us through and through, with half-divine perception, but is no more one of us than Jove is.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Blackwood's, LVI(1844), 54.

⁵² Goethe's Poems, p. 9.

⁵³ Blackwood's, CXLVII(1890), 688.

⁵⁴ Anon., "A Century of Great Poets. From 1750 Downwards," Blackwood's, CXII(1872), 675.

If, in spite of his remoteness, Goethe's poetry was as well represented in Blackwood's as that of Schiller, it is undoubtedly due to Goethe's great fame at home and abroad.

Klopstock was one of the poets who were held in very high esteem at the beginning of the century. In the years 1817 and 1818, three of his poems were published in Blackwood's. These were "Die beiden Gräber," "Die Lehrstunde," and "An Ebert." In a review of the Biographia Literaria, Coleridge was severely criticised by a columnist in Blackwood's for presenting a rather ridiculous portrait of "that illustrious old man." In his account of a visit with Klopstock, Coleridge makes "the great man talk in a very silly, weak, and ignorant manner." The reviewer is indignant at the authoritative manner in which Coleridge forced his views on the old poet. "We can conceive nothing more odious and brutal," he writes, "than two young ignorant lads from Cambridge forcing themselves upon the retirement of this illustrious old man, and, instead of listening with love, admiration, and reverence, to his sentiments and opinions, insolently obtruding upon him their own crude and mistaken fancies."⁵⁵ After 1818, however, Klopstock's poems cease to figure in the pages of Blackwood's; his name was mentioned only once more in a notice of publication of Der Messias, which appeared in 1826. ⁵⁶

The very opposite is true of Heinrich Heine. His name is mentioned for the first time in an article on "The Modern German School of Irony" which appeared in 1835. After dealing with Jean Paul

⁵⁵ Anon., "Some Observations on the Biographia Literaria of Coleridge," Blackwood's, II(1818), 16.

⁵⁶ Blackwood's, XIX(1826), . 370.

whom he regards as the founder of the modern school of irony, and for whom he has nothing but high praise, the reviewer turns to Börne and Heine, "his living caricaturists, rather than imitators . . . who we imagine flatter themselves most idly, that they have inherited his mantle. Alas! They have inherited and improved upon his faults; but of his playful fancy, brilliant wit, rich imagination, and boundless erudition, little indeed has fallen to their share."⁵⁷ They are particularly dangerous poets, because they are rebellious and subversive for the mere sake of rebellion.

Börne and Heine "are the two most hyper-ultra revolutionists of all existing liberals. They seem to consider rebellion and revolution not as fearful means to an important and desirable end, but as things in themselves delightful and desirable. Börne is actually intoxicated with joy, whenever he conceives a vague hope that, somewhere or other, kings, princes, and nobles are likely to be butchered."⁵⁸

Heine is regarded as the better poet; in many respects, he is even quite "agreeable," but for that he is a "far more objectionable and dangerous writer." In the light of the criticism of the day, it is easy to understand this attitude toward the German ironists. Instead of moralizing and ennobling, these irresponsible writers were cheerfully doing the very opposite. The reviewer is full of regret over "the perversion, the desecration of one of the noblest gifts of God to man, i. e., genius," he is full of loathing of the "utter recklessness of the moral corruption which such writings as these are calculated to generate amongst the young, the inexperienced, the unenlightened," and, looking farther, he recognizes in such writers "the most

⁵⁷ Blackwood's, XXXVIII(1835), 376.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 378.

portentous, of the signs of the times."⁵⁹

Six years later, in 1841, Heine's name was used to illustrate an anti-Semitic thesis. In an article entitled "Hebraistic," the claim was made that Jews had no talent for literature of any kind. In order to prove "the anti-literary and pro-old-clothes propensities of the Jews in all the countries of modern Europe," the author of the article undertakes to refute the common belief that, in Germany at any rate, Jewish intellect was able to shake off its ghetto mentality and its base bondage to money. Undaunted by the seeming difficulty of his task--for Heine was a "strongarmed Maccabee" to war against--the author sets out to oppose Jewish pretensions to literary talent. Such unhappy characters as Heine and Börne, he points out, attain their reputation in the world of letters only by a total abnegation of their Jewish character. Since the views they promote are by no means Jewish--they are those of Saint-Simon and Robert Owen--their literature cannot be considered Jewish. Therefore, the author reasons with questionable logic, they can in no sense be regarded as valid exceptions to the rule that the Jews have no turn for literature.⁶⁰

Until 1877, none of Heine's poems appeared in Blackwood's. By that time the attitude toward him had undergone a radical change, and between April 1877 and October 1878 the "Translations From Heine" appeared. The translator was again Sir Theodore Martin. An article, which appeared in 1877, attempts a reassessment of the poet. Now Heine is regarded "not only as a wit, poet, and satirist, but as man, with soul striving to reach the heights, and body chained to earth."

59 Ibid., 380.

60 Ibid., 380.

He awakens our "curiosity, and fascinates our thought, with the keen interest of a living enigma." The reviewer praises Heine for the keen insight he has into the human soul--he "reveals us the height and depth of our own capacities, the shades of finest feeling that hardly we had thought to ourselves possess, till, by the light of his introspective genius, he made all clear." It is because his life symbolizes the troubles and sorrows of each individual, that it is easy to understand and to forgive him:

Is it not that Heine is as the evoked spectral apparition of all the poignant griefs, doubts, revolts, questionings, and aspirations of each one of us? Is it not for this that, readily admitting his sins and failings as great, we as readily absolve him, and are largely merciful towards him and his faults?"⁶¹

Here are two examples of Martin's translations; the first is quite competent, the second is superior:

Thou art even as a flower is,
So gentle, pure, and fair;
I gaze on thee and sadness
Comes over my heart unaware.

I feel as though I should lay, sweet,
My hands on thy head with a prayer
That God may keep thee always, sweet,
As gentle, and pure, and fair!⁶²

'Twas in the glorious month of May,
When all the buds were blowing,
I felt--sh me, how sweet it was!--
Love in my heart a--growing.

Du bist wie eine Blume
So hold und schön und rein;
Ich schau' dich an, und Wehmut
Schleicht mir ins Herz hinein.

Mir ist als ob ich die Hände
Aufs Haupt dir legen sollt',
Betend, dass Gott dich erhalte
So rein und schön und hold.⁶³

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,
Als alle Knospen sprengen,
Da ist in meinem Herzen
Die Liebe aufgegangen.

61 Anon., "Heine," Blackwood's, CXXII(1877), 74.

62 Blackwood's, CXXIII(1878), 89.

63 Heines sämtliche Werke, ed. Ernst Elster (Leipzig, 1890), I, 117,--
hereafter cited as Heines sämtliche Werke.

'Twas in the glorious month of May,
When all the birds were quiring,
In burning words I told her all
My yearning, my aspiring.⁶⁴

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,
Als alle Vögel sangen,
Da hab' ich ihr gestanden
Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.⁶⁵

While admitting that in these two and a few other poems Sir Theodore Martin "shows far more than average skill,"⁶⁶ S.L. Wormley cautions against too ready an acceptance of Martin's translations of Heine. Although they appealed to the greatest number of readers in nineteenth-century England, his renderings "are in no wise superior to those of a great many of the minor writers who tried their hands at reproducing the inimitable Heine--and indeed they are quite inferior to those of more than one who laid no particular claim to the art of translation."⁶⁷ On the whole, he asserts, "Sir Theodore Martin is not endowed with the proper gifts of the translator and in the main shows little ability in the art."⁶⁸

Another German poet whose work was well represented in Blackwood's Magazine, was Ludwig Uhland. In 1836, "Ballads from the German of Ludwig Uhland" were published in two instalments. Among the nine poems included in the series, were such well-known compositions as "Des Sängers Fluch," "Das Schloss am Meer," and "Der Student." In 1863, on the occasion of the poet's death, an extremely favourable estimation of Uhland's work, including several of his best lyrics, was published. The author declares that since the death of Goethe, Uhland

⁶⁴ Blackwood's, CXXIII(1878), 90.

⁶⁵ Heines sämtliche Werke, I, 66.

⁶⁶ Stanton Lawrence Wormley, Heine in England (North Carolina, 1943), p.10.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 11.

"has been, at least in the hearts of the people, the Laureate of Germany. . . . He has done for Germany what even Schiller and Goethe with all their greatness omitted to do in the same degree--he has immortalized her local recollections."⁶⁹ Characteristically, the ballad "Des Sängers Fluch" is singled out as expressing the poet's ethical bent. The reviewer finds in it much the same values as others have found in Schiller's ballads. The poem, he claims, "is the declaration of the greatness and holiness of the poet's mission, and a prophecy of the annihilation of all earthly pomp that is founded on injustice and wrong, which it is the poet's highest duty to raise his voice against. It might also be entitled "The Martyr Minstrel."⁷⁰

A comparison of this translation with the earlier one might be of value:

In days of old a castle stood, it stood so haught and high,
Wide o'er the lands it shone to where the blue sea met the sky;
All round it lush flower-gardens a perfumed girdle made,
Wherein with radiance rainbow-arched reviving fountains played.⁷¹

Es stand in alten Zeiten ein Schloss, so hoch und hehr,
Weit glänzt' es über die Lande bis an das blaue Meer,
Und rings von duft'gen Gärten ein blütenreicher Kranz,
Drin sprangen frische Brunnen in Regenbogenglanz.⁷²

Here is the earlier version from the year 1836:

So loftily in olden times a royal castle stood,
Wide looked it o'er a landscape of hill, and plain, and flood;
And round it lay a garden, a bright and flowery ring,
Where flashed in rainbow splendour the gush of many a spring.⁷³

With such blurred imagery as "looked" for "glänzt,"--such interpolations

⁶⁹ Anon., "Ludwig Uhland," Blackwood's, XCIII(1863), 586.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 590.

⁷¹ Ibid., 590.

⁷² Uhlands gesammelte Werke, ed. Hermann Fischer (Stuttgart, n.d.), I, 264.

⁷³ W. E. A., "Ballads from the German of Ludwig Uhland," Blackwood's, XXXIX(1836), 381.

as "royal castle" for "Schloss,"--and such redundancy as "bright and flowery ring,"--the version of 1836 is markedly inferior to the later one. Not only does the later translation manage to stay closer to the original, it is also written in a more natural, unforced language, and it has a much smoother rhythm.

After 1863, only one of Uhland's ballads, "Des Sängers Fluch," appeared in the magazine. There were, however, other poets whose work was occasionally published in the journal. These poets were Friedrich Rückert, Karl Theodor Körner, Hölderlin, Haller, and Bürger. As the poems of these authors invariably appeared singly and without commentaries, their full mention here would not throw any new light on the picture gained, and would only result in a more or less inconclusive list of names and dates.⁷⁴

It is interesting, on the other hand, to speculate on the total absence from the magazine of such writers as Hölderlin, Heinrich von Kleist, and the German Romantic poets, Arnim, Brentano, Eichendorff, and Novalis. Hölderlin and Kleist were, of course, little known--and even less appreciated--in their own country, and England's indifference to them is therefore not surprising. But it is more difficult to account for the neglect of the Romantic poets. First of all, it must be remembered that the period of enthusiasm for the German "Sturm und Drang" writers, i. e., for the Romantic strain in literature, had come to an end at the turn of the century, and that, by the time Blackwood's was established, a reaction against Romanticism was under way. The

⁷⁴ For the sake of completeness, a list of these poems has been given in the bibliographical check list of items pertaining to poetry.

Romantic poets, it was felt, were out of step with the time. Critics and public alike were losing patience with their ineffectual glorifying of simple, idyllic pastoral scenes, and began to demand that the poet give them moral instruction, that he somehow give beautiful expression to the vague feeling of anguish and spiritual despair, so much part of the Victorian age, that he, in short, fill the chasm which the decline of religion had left. These are the reasons why Schiller and Uhland were so popular, why the attitude towards Heine changed so radically, why Goethe was regarded, for all his greatness, as a somewhat unsympathetic figure, and, at the same time, why many German poets who did not fulfill these needs were neglected.

2. Drama

Robert Pearse Gillies, writing for Blackwood's in 1820, observes that, unlike the Germans "who have bestowed deep and deliberate study on the philosophy of the drama," English audiences are for the most part comprised of "lovers of spectacle, effect and declamation."¹ This is, indeed, a good characterization of the early Victorian theatrical scene, when the theatre was hardly more than a place where "the beggary and rascality of London were pouring in to their low amusement, from the neighbouring gin palaces and thieves' cellars."² As long as the theatres were the chosen homes of gamblers, rakes, and prostitutes, the

¹ [R. P. Gillies,] "Horae Germanicae VI," Blackwood's, VII(1820), 407.

² From Dickens to Hardy, ed. B. Ford, Pelican Books, A 413 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1958), p. 115.

honest and quiet-minded middle classes, afraid of having their sensibilities offended by coarse conversation around them or by missiles playfully flung at the actors, avoided them. They preferred to stay at home and relax with the latest four-volume novel.

It is understandable that such conditions were not conducive to the production of great drama. While it cannot be denied that the popularity of the novel and the predominance of great actors had something to do with the dearth of legitimate drama in Victorian England, these phenomena were effects rather than causes of the lack of interest in the theatre. The real reasons lie deeper and are more recondite. An examination of the great dramatic epochs of the past--the Greece of Pericles, the Spain of Lope de Vega, seventeenth century France, and the England of Elizabeth I--will show, that it is only at times when profound social agreements or disagreements find expression in the drama, and when there is real understanding between authors and audiences, that this genre flourishes. Clearly, Victorian England was not one of those times. Although its greatest poets--Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne--devoted many years to the writing of plays, their dramatic work is manifestly inferior to their poetic compositions. Such a failure stems, in a large measure, from the fact that these play-writing poets were, in a real sense, alienated from their society. This is even true of as "representative" a poet as Tennyson.

The monopoly of the two patent houses--Covent Garden and Drury Lane--which forbade the arising of many new theatres, is another factor that militated against new developments in the drama. When the Act "for regulating theatres" of 1843--"unquestionably . . . the most

noted theatrical event"³ of the nineteenth century--destroyed the monopoly of these houses, the way for a rejuvenation of the drama was clear. But any real progress was slow. "Indeed, for the decades immediately following the date when the Act was passed through Parliament we might imagine that there was even an increase of melodramatic and spectacular pieces."⁴ Having lost touch with modern conditions, the drama was slow in realizing the possibilities of the new regime and in evolving a fresh literary technique. In fact, it was only towards the end of the century, when the appearance of Oscar Wilde, the Irish dramatists--Shaw, Synge, and Yeats--and, above all, the influence of Ibsen, had revived interest in the drama, that the theatre can be said to have regained its popularity.

It is easy to infer from these observations that, in the first half of the century, conditions were propitious for the introduction of foreign plays. The popular repertoire did, indeed, consist in a large measure of economical and hasty translations of French and German plays. The popularity of such plays with the play-going lower classes and the play-reading middle classes is unequivocally reflected in the current periodical publications. Blackwood's was among the most indefatigable supporters of the invading tide of German drama. This is primarily due to the fact that Robert Pearse Gillies and John Gibson Lockhart, two "irrepressible devotees of German thought,"⁵ were among its main contributors. Gillies inaugurated a series of articles, "Horae Germanicae,"

³ Allardyce Nicoll, British Drama (London, 1925), p. 335.

⁴ Ibid., p. 235.

⁵ Ewen, p. 115.

which was exclusively given over to the cause of German literature in general and German drama in particular. The series began with Müllner's Die Schuld, in November 1819, and was brought to a close with Grillparzer's Das goldene Vliess in the October issue of 1828, at which time Gillies assumed editorship of the Foreign Quarterly Review. The importance of the series is particularly great, because, along with lengthy reviews, it contained generous translated excerpts from the works themselves. Besides treating relatively unimportant writers, such as Houwald, Werner, and Müllner, it acquainted the English reading public with the works of such important poets and dramatists as Goethe, Schiller, Uhland, Grillparzer, and Körner. The purpose of these articles was "to glean only scattered flowers on the outskirts of the Thuringian forest," rather than to give a systematic view of the entire field of German literature. "If, then," the reviewer goes on, "by the method which we have followed, an impression has been made, how much more might have been done by a careful selection."⁶

Of all the German dramatists it was Goethe who figured most prominently in these pages. Although only two of his dramas, Faust and Götz von Berlichingen, were reviewed in the series, his name was mentioned in many reviews and articles. Lockhart was a great admirer of Goethe and the review of The Faustus of Goethe, which appeared in June of 1820 as "Horae Germanicae V," was his contribution. He praises Goethe for having given expression to the "most lofty conceptions of the nature of man, and those beings with whom we are connected for good or evil."⁷ Apologizing for his introduction being somewhat scanty and

⁶ [R. P. Gillies,] "Horae Germanicae XV," Blackwood's, XIII(1823), 3.

⁷ [J. G. Lockhart,] "Horae Germanicae V. The Faustus of Goethe," Blackwood's, VII(1820), 235.

uncritical, he admits that "this extraordinary drama defies the critic more than any other work we have met." He is also full of praise for the language, which is "rich yet simple--dignified yet familiar," with all the "magical effects attributed to sound." In fact, Lockhart concludes, "nothing that we know in our language can give an idea of the charm we allude to."⁸

Any translator was clearly at a disadvantage. The excerpts included in the review were, Lockhart claims, not executed by Mr. Gillies, but by "another friend." An article on the "Poetical Translations of Faust, which appeared in Blackwood's in 1840, shows this anonymous friend to have been John Anster. These excerpts, which were published as early as 1820, and which were later extended to include the whole of the First Part of Faust, give Anster the credit of being the first Englishman to translate a part of Faust into English.⁹ His completed translation of the First Part appeared in book form in 1835. Here is how Anster outlines his approach:

To verbal fidelity, I can, of course, make no claim; yet I have not wilfully deviated from it. I have not sought to represent my author's thought by "equivalents", as they are called; but if I may venture to describe what after all has been rather the result of accident than of any fixed purpose, I should say that I have always given a perfectly accurate translation of the very words, now and then expanding the thought by the addition of a clause, which does little more than express something more fully implied in the German than in such English phrases as occurred to me.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ W. F. Hauhart, The Reception of Goethe's Faust in England (New York, 1909), p. 121--hereafter cited as "Hauhart".

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 122.

This does not account for the liberties he has taken with the original. In reality, his "translation" is little more than a paraphrase; or, at best, "a brilliant paraphrase,"¹¹ as Lewes, the biographer of Goethe, has called it. The following is an example of how the translator has "expanded the thought":

Oh how the spell before my sight
Brings nature's hidden ways to light:
See! all things with each other blending--
Each to all its being lending--
All on each in turn depending--
Heavenly ministers descending--
And again to heaven up-tending--
Floating, mingling, interweaving--
Rising, sinking, and receiving
Each from each, while each is giving
On to each and each relieving
Each the pails of gold, the living
Current through the air is heaving;
Breathing blessings, see them bending,
Balanced worlds from change defending,
While everywhere diffused is harmony unending!¹²

This, he claims, is a translation of:

Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt,
Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt!
Wie Himmelskräfte auf und nieder steigen
Und sich die goldenen Eimer reichen!
Mit segenduftenden Schwingen
Vom Himmel durch die Erde dringen,
Harmonisch all' das All durchklingen!¹³

Such is the diffuseness which characterizes the entire translation. In his effort to transcribe the full meaning of the original, the translator has, in many instances, interpolated one half of the lines. In fact, the translation is about twice as long as the original.¹⁴ Parts of

¹¹ Lewes, Life of Goethe, quoted in Hauhart, p. 12⁴.

¹² Hauhart, p. 122.

¹³ Goethes Sämtliche Werke, Jubiläums-Ausgabe (Stuttgart, n.d.), XIII, 22,--hereafter cited as Goethes Sämtliche Werke.

¹⁴ Hauhart, p. 123.

the blank verse, in which the drama is rendered, are no better than prose. For example:

How willingly I would sit up forever,
Gathering instruction from your learned works!
Tomorrow, as a boon on Easter-Day,
You must permit me a few questions more:
I have been diligent in all my studies;
Given my whole heart and time to the pursuit;
And I know much but would learn everything.¹⁵

Ich hätte gern nur immer fortgewacht,
Um so gelehrt mit Euch mich zu besprechen.
Doch morgen, als am ersten Ostertage,
Erlaubt mir ein' und andere Frage.
Mit Eifer hab' ich mich der Studien beflissen;
Zwar weiss ich viel, doch möcht ich alles wissen.¹⁶

Other parts of the verse are easy and graceful, and it is difficult not to admire them. One suspects that, had Anster been imbued with the proper respect for the original, he could have produced an excellent translation. The impression, which this translation made upon the public, was exceedingly favourable. That it was avidly bought and read may be inferred from the large number of editions through which it passed. It has been frequently republished up to recent times.¹⁷

Between the time of Lockhart's review (1820) and the years following Goethe's death, only one translation of Faust was published in England. This was in 1823, when Lord Francis Leveson Gower's Faust: a Drama by Goethe appeared. But the poet's death in 1832 awoke the general consciousness to the merits of his master-piece, and, within a period of two years, five further translations were

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Goethes Sämtliche Werke, XIII, 28.

¹⁷ Hauhart, p. 123.

published.¹⁸

In the above-mentioned article of 1840, on the "Poetical Translations of Faust," an anonymous critic set out "to sit in judgment on these translations." His prime concern in this undertaking, however, were only those translations which were performed in rhyme; for "the exquisite freedom, elasticity, and finish" of the original, unless rendered in verse, lose their "clear, hard, and well-defined outlines" and are "thawed down into a comparatively watery dilution, and melt away like icebergs."¹⁹ According to the theories on the art of translating which at the time prevailed in England, "the style and the manner of writing should be the same character with that of the original work."²⁰ Alexander Fraser Tytler had formulated these theories in his elaborate treatise on the Principles of Translation in 1791, and the Victorian critics, so far as they had any opinion on the subject, adhered to them. Fully aware of the difficulties, with which a translator of Faust was confronted, the author of "Poetical Translations of Faust" maintains that such an enterprise need not be doomed to failure. If the translator, first, refrains from violating the idiom of his own language, and, second, endeavours to remain faithful to "the spirit of the original work," his effort is likely to be at least adequate. This can

¹⁸ Faust: a Tragedy, by J. W. Goethe, translated by John Blackie (Edinburgh, 1834).

Faust: a Tragedy. Translated by D. Syme (Edinburgh, 1834).

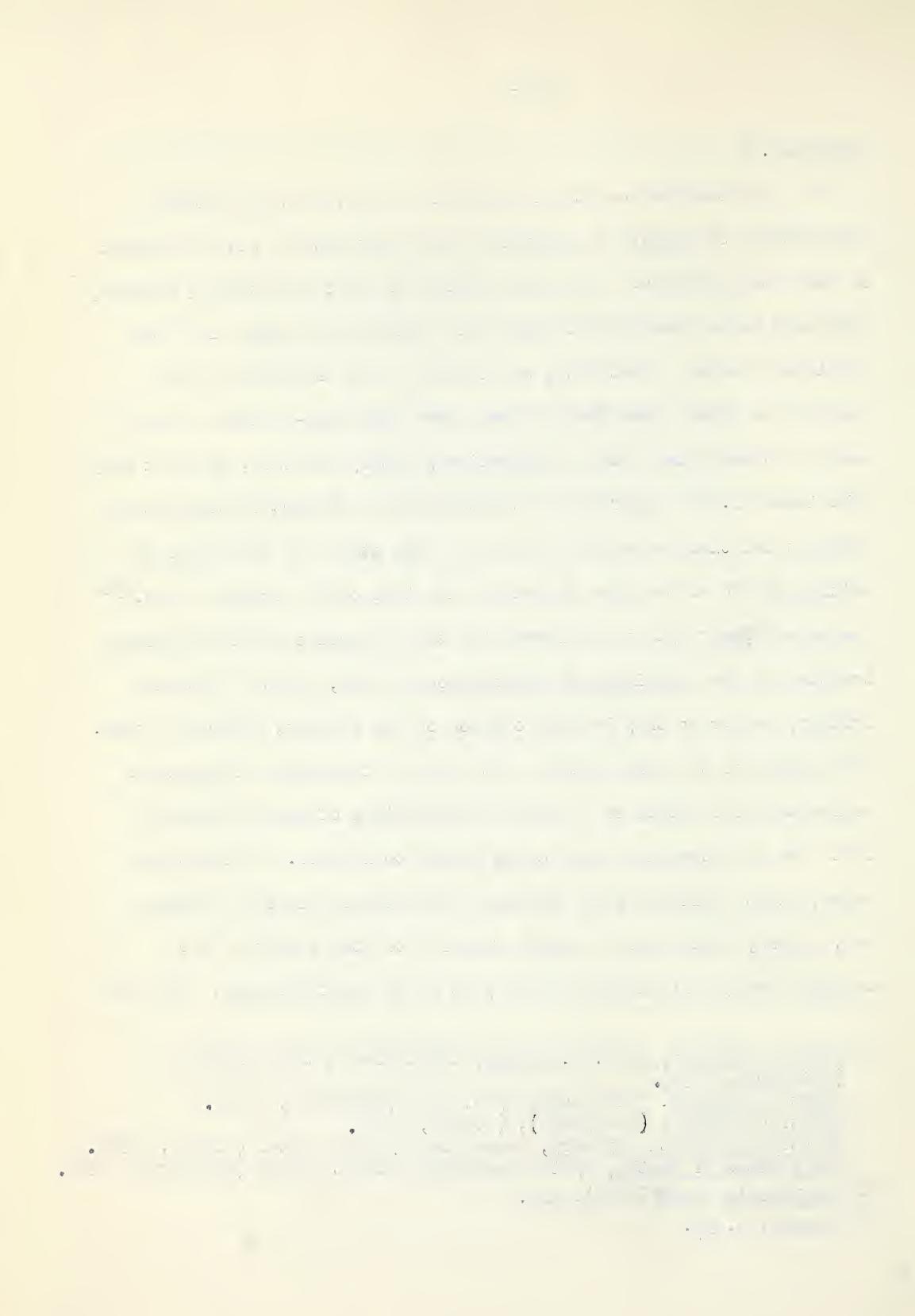
Faust: a Tragedy, [Anonymous], (London, 1834).

Faustus: a Dramatic Mystery, translated by John Anster (London, 1835).

The Faustus of Goethe, by the Honourable Robert Talbot (Edinburgh, 1835).

¹⁹ Blackwood's, XLVII (1840), 223.

²⁰ Hauhart, p. 90.



hardly be said, the author feels, of the translations that have appeared so far. In fact, saying that they are characterized by "the total absence of anything like good English," would be putting the point too mildly; it would be much truer to say, he continues, that these efforts exhibit a "barbarous dialect," "strange grammatical contortions," and an "entire abandonment of everything approaching to human speech."²¹ "Verily," the author sadly concludes, "much requires to be done before the English public can know anything at all about the veritable Faust." Unwilling to leave the subject on such a disillusioned note, he gives forth with his own version of the opening soliloquy, which he modestly considers "more like the original than some of the samples we have given."

All that philosophy can teach,
All that theology can preach,
The lore of lawyer and of leech
Is mine--and now my curse on each!
For here I stand when all is o'er,
No whit wiser than before.²²

It is a rather debatable point whether this version in any way improved upon Anster's translation:

Alas! I have explored
Philosophy, and Law, and Medicine,
And over deep Divinity have pored,
Studying with ardent and laborious zeal--
And here I am at last, a very fool,
With useless learning curs'd,
No wiser than at first!²³

²¹ Blackwood's, XLVII(1840), 223.

²² Ibid., 240.

²³ [J. G. Lockhart,] "Horae Germanicae V," Blackwood's, VII(1820), 235.

Habe nun, ach! Philosophie,
Juristerei und Medizin,
Und leider auch Theologie,
Durchaus studiert, mit heissem Bemühn.
Da steh ich nun, ich armer Tor!
Und bin so klug als wie zuvor;²⁴

However intact the fastidious critic may have kept the English idiom, one cannot help feeling that "the spirit of the original work" got lost somewhere in the process of translating. For not one of the six lines as much as hints at the weariness and disillusionment that pervade every word of the original. The article finally closes with the hopeful observation that "other versions are in the wind" and a coy half-promise that, should nothing worthwhile soon transpire, the author himself may attempt one.

Götz von Berlichingen (1773) was Goethe's second play to find its way into the pages of "Horae Germanicae." This time Gillies was the reviewer. Copious extracts from the translation of Sir Walter Scott, which had been originally published in 1799, and a lengthy introduction to the historical background of the play, enabled the reader fully to appreciate it. Gillies, though primarily a Schiller enthusiast, overflows with praise for Goethe's youthful work. "Never perhaps," he rhapsodizes, "was the first dramatic work of any author more decidedly entitled to the praise of originality." While admitting that there are some "signal errors of taste" which are to be attributed to the poet's impetuous youthfulness, Gillies maintains that this very fact constitutes the chief attraction of the drama. "Few", he goes on,

²⁴ Goethes Sämtliche Werke, XII, 19.

"very few, mature works of any genius are more resplendently instinct with the spirit of energy."²⁵

Among all the journalists, it was Lockhart, however, who most staunchly supported the cause of Goethe in England. When Francis Jeffrey persisted in publishing abusive criticisms of Goethe, Lockhart characteristically came to the defense of his idol. In his scathing strictures of Jeffrey and the Edinburgh Review, he calls Goethe "a good, a great, and an old man, whose name will be reverenced by the world many hundred years after all the reviewers that ever insulted his genius shall be forgotten."²⁶ His unswerving enthusiasm for Goethe was so great, in fact, that it tended to blind him to excellences in the work of other poets. Thus, writing in 1819, he claims that Schiller "has produced no works more perfect and satisfactory in form than Goethe's-- and while neither Wallenstein nor Wilhelm Tell, nor Mary Stuart, can be placed above the Egmont--nor the Bride of Messina above Iphigenie--it must be confessed, that among the whole creations of his genius, he has left nothing that can sustain for richness of invention, for purity and variety and strength of language, any comparison with the Faustus."²⁷

But Lockhart was too good a critic to allow his biased judgment of Schiller to stand unmodified. His review of Wallenstein--Schiller's first drama to appear in Blackwood's--in 1823, already marks his conversion to Schiller's cause. Not only was Schiller hailed as "one of

²⁵ [R. P. Gillies,] "Horae Germanicae XX. Goetz von Berlichingen, a Tragedy by Goethe," Blackwood's, XVI(1824), 369.

²⁶ "On the critique of Goethe's life in the Edinburgh Review," Blackwood's, IV(1818), 212.

²⁷ Ibid., 122.

the true masters of tragedy," he was "by far the greatest master of tragedy that has appeared in Europe since the death of Calderon. In many particulars he is the inferior of Goethe--but in the drama, the real living drama of tragic action, he is, we cannot doubt it, his illustrious countryman's superior."²⁸ This admiration for Schiller stemmed, in a large measure, from the fact that Schiller--in Lockhart's opinion--was so successful an imitator of Shakespeare. His comment on the final scene of Wallenstein's Death bears this out. The last scene, he writes, is "imagined almost as if the spirit of Shakespeare had been near to Schiller in his midnight dreams."²⁹ A large portion of the introduction with which he prefaces his review, Lockhart devotes to the consideration of Schiller's poetical career, and only just mentions the historical background of the play, because the reader may gather whatever information he requires from Madame de Staél's Germany which is "in every hand." Coleridge's translation of the drama, which had originally appeared in 1800 and in the meantime "was almost entirely lost sight of," is praised as "by far the best translation of a foreign tragic drama which our English literature possesses."³⁰ The discrepancy which exists between "the prodigious effect" the play had on Germany, and the "apathy" with which it was received in England, Lockhart reasons, furnishes "striking proof of the very different circumstances under which the poetic literatures of these two kindred regions were placed at that

²⁸ [J. G. Lockhart] "Horae Germanicae XVII. Wallenstein, translated by Coleridge," Blackwood's, XIV(1823), 377.

²⁹ Ibid., 395.

³⁰ Ibid., 377.

period." In 1800, the English public "had got out of the habit of looking for good new poetry." Had it been an English original, it might have done wonders by way of regenerating literary production, "but we were at our darkest too proud to be kindled by a foreign torch."³¹ The excellence of the translation, which "places Mr. Coleridge in the very first rank of poetic translators," may be illustrated by a descriptive passage from Act V of the last part of the trilogy:

There is a busy motion in the heaven,
The wind doth chase the flag upon the tower;
Fast fly the clouds: the sickle of the moon,
Struggling, darts snatches of uncertain light.
No form of star is visible. That one
White stain of light, that, single glimmering yonder,
Is from Cassiopoeia, and therein
Is Jupiter.--But now
The blackness of the troubled element hides him!³²

Am Himmel ist geschäftige Bewegung
Des Turmes Fahne jagt der Wind, schnell geht
Der Wolken Zug, die Mondessichel wankt,
Und durch die Nacht zuckt ungewisse Helle.
--Kein Sternbild ist zu sehen! Der matte Schein dort,
Der einzelne, ist aus der Kassiopeia,
Und dahin steht der Jupiter--Doch jetzt
Deckt ihn die Schwärze des Gewitterhimmels!³³

For all its "linguistic and stylistic errors," Coleridge's translation "stands with the pre-eminent versions of German works in English. It is not, however, as some of our own contemporaries claim, superior to the original."³⁴

³¹ Ibid., 380.

³² Ibid., 390.

³³ Schillers Werke, ed. L. Bellermann (Leipzig, 1895), IV, 334,--
hereafter cited as Schillers Werke.

³⁴ Ewen, p. 65.

In the subsequent years, two further plays by Schiller--Fiesko and Wilhelm Tell--were reviewed by Gillies in the "Horae Germanicae" column. Fiesko (1782), which appeared in the August issue of 1824, is admired for its dramatic effectiveness, lively dialogues, and sharp characterization. It is the one play, Gillies believes, that lends itself most readily for production in a foreign tongue, provided that some slight modifications are introduced first. For one thing, the concluding scenes ought to be changed "in such a way that they would not prove offensive to the overfastidious delicacy of an English reader," and, furthermore, the entire play should "be wrought down to that level which is suited to the powers of English actors." This, Gillies concludes, would not imply lack of respect for the dramatist, for "in a country where Shakespeare is remodelled, so must Schiller be."³⁵

Such petty fault-finding was by no means restricted to Schiller. Goethe had been accused of some "signal errors of taste" in Götz von Berlichingen and Grillparzer was repeatedly censured for violating "moral propriety." Nor was Gillies the only critic whose sensibilities were so easily offended; and it would be misleading to regard his excessive preoccupation with morality as a personal idiosyncracy. This line of criticism can only be understood in the light of the social background out of which it arose. The disillusionment and despair caused by the failure of Christian theology to answer the questions of science and the subsequent loss of faith in Christian doctrine--the heart of the Victorian dilemma--resulted in art and literature being assigned the

³⁵ [R. P. Gillies,] "Horae Germanicae XVIII. Schiller's Fiesko," Blackwood's, XVI(1824), 194.

place formerly occupied by religion. And as such, literature had a very high function to perform. It was the most influential critic of the age, Matthew Arnold, who asserted that what men "want, is something to animate and ennoble them--not merely to add zest to their melancholy or grace to their dreams."³⁶ It is, therefore, not surprising that Victorian critics disapproved of works that, in their opinion, failed to propose positive and constructive solutions to the problems of life.

In 1825, Gillies reviewed Schiller's last drama, Wilhelm Tell (1805). He deems it to be the best suited for introducing Schiller to British audiences for, besides being a particular favourite with the Germans, it is "most consonant with British taste and feelings." The only criticism that is levelled against this play is that the imitation of Shakespeare is "occasionally too obvious to escape the most careless reader." However much Schiller may have held nature and Shakespeare to be the same, he should rather have imitated "his prototype in studying the 'mighty mother' herself, than confined his ambition to copying her portraits by her English master."³⁷

"Christopher North"--Professor John Wilson--was also interested in German literature, and in his exceedingly popular "Noctes Ambrosianae," which appeared in Blackwood's, often commented on the German literary scene. In 1819, surveying the dramatic productions of his own time, he singled out Schiller for high praise and he deplored the fact that

³⁶ Jamison, p. 19.

³⁷ [R. P. Gillies] "Horae Germanicae XXI. Schiller's Wilhelm Tell," Blackwood's, XVII (1825), 299.

England had not a single tragic poet.

Schiller is, perhaps, the only great tragic poet, who has lived in the same day with ourselves. And wild and portentous as his shapes of life often are, who is there that does not feel that the strange power by which they hold us is derived from the very motions of our blood, and that the breath by which we live breathes in them? He has thrown back his scenes into other times of the world; but we find ourselves there. It is from real, present life, that he has borrowed that terrible spell of passion by which he shakes so inwardly the very seat of feeling and thought. The tragic poets of England in the age of our dramatic literature, have shown the same power, and they drew it from the same source; from imagination submitted to human life, and dwelling in the midst of it . . .³⁸

In 1819, "another astonishing genius" who promises "still greater wonders than Müllner," was enthusiastically presented to the readers of Blackwood's. This was Franz Grillparzer, whose Ahnfrau (1817) came under review. Adolf Müllner's play, Die Schuld (1816), which had opened the "Horae Germanicae" series, had acquainted the English reading public with the German "fate tragedy." In Germany this genre had gained popularity after the death of Schiller, and continued to dominate the popular stage between 1810 and 1820. In England, however, it never gained a permanent footing, and what popularity it did attain was short-lived and ineffectual.

It was as one of the fate dramatists, that Grillparzer first became known in England. Henceforth, to his detriment, he was to be labelled "the author of the Ancestress." Lockhart, whose enthusiasm had considerably subsided since his review of Die Schuld,³⁹ was now

³⁸ Blackwood's, V(1819), 231.

³⁹ Blackwood's, VI(1819), 121 ff.

much more reserved in his assessment of the merits of this School.

Speaking of the German authors' predilection for the doctrine of fatalism, he remarks: "Indeed very few of them seem to think it possible to compose a powerful tragedy without introducing the idea of some dark impending destiny long predetermined--long announced imperfectly--long dreaded obscurely--in the accomplishment of which the chief persons of the drama are to suffer miseries for which their own personal offences have not been sufficient to furnish any due cause."⁴⁰ Leaving the question open, however, whether Grillparzer was "wise" in embracing the doctrine of fatalism, he yet admits that the effect it produces in his hands "is such as to account very easily for the partiality with which dramas, composed on this principle, are now regarded by all the audiences and almost all the critics of Germany."⁴¹

It was not until April 1826, that Grillparzer's second play, Sappho (1818), was reviewed in the "Horae Germanicae" column. This time Gillies was the reviewer. And it is here that his shortcomings as a critic are particularly conspicuous. The criticism he levels against Sappho is of a two-fold nature. First of all, he finds fault with the subject matter. The relationship of the elderly Sappho with the young Phaon, he holds, is unsuitable for stage presentation, for the depiction of a "passion neither sanctioned, nor intended to be sanctioned, by marriage, nor yet qualified by remorse . . . necessitated the violation of moral propriety." It is clear, that in a society

⁴⁰ [J.G. Lockhart,] "Horae Germanicae II, The Ancestress, a tragedy by Grillparzer," Blackwood's, VI(1819), 247.

⁴¹ Ibid., 247.

where it was the questionable function of literature to inculcate morality and to teach virtuous behaviour, and where the therapeutic value of literary works was the primary criterion for judging them, it was the inevitable fate of Grillparzer's beautiful tragedy to be considered "decidedly objectionable."⁴²

With regard to the aesthetic aspect of the play, his criticism is more serious. The play is weakened, he feels, by a draw-out ending. Instead of ringing the curtain down on Sappho's death, Grillparzer "disturbs our sympathy with the deeply feeling, high-minded Sappho, by obtruding upon us Phaon's paltry regrets, which do not even draw him from the side of the lamenting Melitta to look after his victim."⁴³ Then he "introduces a discussion between Rhemmes . . . and the faithless lover, as to whether Sappho will, or will not, be dashed to pieces as she falls against a projecting crag of the rock from which she flings herself." Gillies objection here is that the scene violates the laws of physics. "We apprehend, that not even by taking Mathew's rapidity of elocution as the measure of time, could these doubts be compressed into any sort of compatibility with the law of gravity, and the acceleration of motion in falling bodies."⁴⁴ Such criticism, however, must be rejected as being dramatically unsound. Aside from the fact that an ending, such as Gillies had in mind, would have violated dramatic convention which demands that a curtain speech be spoken over the body of the

⁴² [R. P. Gillies,] "Horae Germanicae XXII. Sappho by Franz Grillparzer," Blackwood's, XIX(1826), 404.

⁴³ Ibid., 415.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 415.

tragic hero, it would have been ineffective from the point of view of characterization. On the other hand, Gillies was by no means blind to the "beauties abounding in Sappho." He was full of praise for "the just conception and delineation of character, the admirable portraiture of the working of the human heart,--exhibited alike in the feminine tenderness and delicacy, the creative imagination, and the lofty self-consciousness . . . and lastly, the rich vein of poetry adorning and vivifying the whole."⁴⁵

In 1827, in a review of König Ottokars Glück und Ende (1823) Gillies regards Grillparzer as the best writer of the "New School of German Tragedy." He asserts his superiority over Müllner: "We must think . . . Franz Grillparzer superior to his rival in poetic beauty, and powerful, profound, refined conception of character; equal to him in invention and dramatic skill, and inferior only in correct taste."⁴⁶ Again his sensibilities are perturbed by "those gross violations of its [taste's] laws, which shocked us in Die Ahnfrau and Sappho." With the exception of his criticism of Grillparzer's lack of taste, his judgments are remarkably valid.

In his review of Ottokar, Gillies mentioned Das goldene Vlies and expressed regret that lack of space in the magazine and the exceptional length of the trilogy caused such a delay in publishing a review with excerpts. But in 1828, the review finally appeared. Because of the great length of the play, the critical introduction

⁴⁵ Ibid., 416.

⁴⁶ [R. P. Gillies] "Horae Germanicae XXV. King Ottokar's prosperity and death, by Franz Grillparzer," Blackwood's, XXII(1827), 300.

confined itself to a few brief comments on the characterization, which is praised for its clear conception and delineation.

A consideration--however cursory--of the translations of those excerpts with which the reviews were interspersed, will throw some light on the care expended in their performance, and, by implication, constitute a comment on the attitude of Blackwood's and its contributors towards the German drama in general, and their effort to present it to the readers through faithful translations.

At the time when Gillies translated the excerpts from Die Ahnfrau, he had been studying German for only three years, and the translation reflects a good deal of the difficulties with which he could not cope. Thus, besides some awkward Germanisms and mistranslations, his rendering fails to convey the force and impact that is so characteristic of the original. Six years later, when he attempted the translation of Sappho, his talents had considerably improved. An excerpt from Sappho's final speech will illustrate the poetic quality of his translation.

Ye've crown'd with victory this feeble head,
And ye have planted in far distant lands
The songstress' fame--Seed for eternity!
My golden lays resound from foreign tongues,
And only with the earth shall Sappho set.
I thank you!

• • • • •
To mortals love, and reverence to the gods;
Enjoy what blooms for you, and think of me!
Thus the last debt of life do I discharge.⁴⁷
Bless them great deities, and me received!

⁴⁷ R. P. Gillies, "Horae Germanicae XXII," Blackwood's, XIX(1826), 416.

Ihr habt mit Sieg dies schwache Haupt gekrönt
Und ausgesät in weitentfernte Lande
Der Dichterin Ruhm, Saat für die Ewigkeit!
Es tönt mein goldenes Lied von fremden Zungen,
Und mit der Erde nur wird Sappho untergehn.
Ich dank' euch.

• • • • •
Den Menschen Liebe und den Göttern Ehrfurcht!
Geniesset, was euch blüht, und denket mein!
So zahle ich die letzte Schuld des Lebens!⁴⁸
Ihr Götter, segnet sie und nehmt mich auf!

Gillies translation of Ottokar is equally accomplished. Staying as close as possible to the original, he succeeded particularly well in conveying the mood and spirit of the play. Here is an excerpt from Rudolf's speech over the dead Ottokar:

Liest thou so naked, so despoiled, great king,
Resting thy head upon thy servant's breast,
Of all thy splendour--all thy opulence,
Not one poor covering left, that, as a shroud,
May wrap thy corse! See the Imperial mentle
Thou sough'st, I here strip off, spreading it o'er thee,
That as an Emperor thou mayst be interred,
A beggar who hast died. Bear him to Laa;
In princely state there let him lie until
To his forefethres' place of rest convey'd.

So liegst du nackt und schmucklos, grosser König,
Das Haupt gelegt in deines Dieners Schoss;
Und ist von deinem Prunk und Reichtum allen
Nicht eine arme Decke dir geblieben,
Als Leichtentuch zu hüllen deinen Leib.
Den Kaisermantel, dem du nachgestrebt,
Ich nehm' ihn ab und breit ihn über dich,
Dass als ein Kaiser du begraben werdest,
Der du gestorben als ein Bettler bist.
Bringt ihn nach Laa und stellt ihn fürstlich aus,
Bis man ihn holt zur Ruhstatt seiner Ahnen.

⁴⁸ Grillparzers Werke, ed. R. Franz (Leipzig, n.d.), II, 103,--hereafter cited as Grillparzers Werke.

⁴⁹ [R. P. Gillies,] "Horae Germanicae XXV," Blackwood's, XXII(1827), 300.

⁵⁰ Grillparzers Werke, III, 406.

Gillies translation of Das goldene Vliess, though not of uniform excellence, does, in part at least, achieve considerable distinction. Not only is he able to suggest the moods of the various scenes, he also manages to write verse that characterizes the various figures. One of Medea's speeches may serve as an illustration:

Thou, what falls on thee bear!
For, sooth! not undeserved it falls on thee.
As thou, before me, on the bare earth liest,
So I lay once in Colchis, thee before,
Beseaching thee forbearance; - and in vain.
Guilty, blindly, was thy hand put forth
To seize, - albeit I forwarned thee, death.
So take, what proudly, lightly, thou hast will'd, -
DEATH.-- But from thee asunder now I go,
For evermore. Lo! 'tis the last time, in all
The ever-flowing ages, the last hour,
That we two may change word with word, my husband!⁵¹

Du trage was dich trifft,
Denn, wahrlich, unverdient trifft es dich nicht!
Wie du vor mir liegst auf der nackten Erde,
So lag auch ich in Kolchis einst vor dir
Und bat um Schonung; doch du schontest nicht!
Mit blindem Frevel griffst du nach den Losen,
Ob ich dir zurief gleich: du greifst den Tod!
So habe denn was trotzend du gewollt:
Den Tod. Ich aber scheide jetzt von dir
Auf immerdar. Es ist das letzte Mal,
In alle Ewigkeit das letzte Mal,
Dass ich zu dir nun rede mein Gemahl.⁵²

In this discussion of Blackwood's attitude to the German drama, an article from the year 1825 is of particular interest. It is entitled "The New German School of Tragedy" and its author--signed S. A.--is probably Sarah Austin.⁵³ Although her main concern

⁵¹ [R. P. Gillies] "Hercæ Germanicae XVI. The Golden Fleece. By Franz Grillparzer," Blackwood's, XXIV (1828), 155.

⁵² Grillparzers Werke, II, 345.

⁵³ Morgan and Hohlfeld, p. 61.

is the consideration of the work of Grillparzer and Müllner, she begins her essay with a short summary of the history of the German drama. Recognizing the importance of Lessing, she praises him for his path-breaking work in Heilburgische Dramaturgie as having destroyed the "Gallic fetters" of the formal French theatre and having introduced the domestic tragedy. Then she proceeds to deal with the "fall" of this genre. "The very universality of the fashion," she points out, "occasioned its downfall." Under Iffland and Kotzebue, "tragedy lost all traces of its gorgeous dignity, sinking to the level of mere dramatised novel or romance." Schiller is praised for having "turned from it with loathing," and for recognizing that in tragedy, as in any art, "the first requisite is the preservation of the character of art in its most vivid distinction Art pure and undisguised."⁵⁴ After mentioning Goethe as another exponent of this principle, the author proceeds to a detailed examination of the "present school of tragic writers" and endeavours to show that their works constitute the continuation of Schiller's principle. Grillparzer's and Müllner's plays, she declares, "are certainly the genuine and legitimate offspring of Schiller's grand principle, that the character of Art is the first essential."

Grillparzer, "Müllner's chief rival," is regarded from the point of view of fate tragedy, and his play Die Ahnfrau is praised for its skilful versification which contributes to "this marvellous calmness," an effect of the fate tragedy. Sarah Austin--as did Gillies--accuses Grillparzer of lack of taste and expresses the hope that

⁵⁴ [Sarah Austin,] "The new German School of Tragedy," Blackwood's XVII(1825), 286.

"experience and matured taste--this last is a quality particularly wanted in Germany--should correct prevailing extravagances."

For Adolf Müllner, she is full of unequivocal praise. Not only is he regarded as the "inventor" of this new genre, he is also "one of the most admired writers of this new School." In outlining his "system," Miss Austin agrees that the "tremendous Destiny of the ancients is the only basis adequate to support the high, ennobling, although terrible effects of tragedy" and points out that Müllner made it harmonize with our religious creed.⁵⁵ Thus, justice, "stern inflexible justice," is the principle that pervades all tragic compositions. "The effect of this system," she eulogizes, "far exceeds what could readily have been anticipated. The consciousness of a highly artificial design pervades the whole, and dwells so engrossingly upon the mind, as to leave the reader almost uninterested, certainly unaffected, amidst trains of incidents the most horrible, amidst situations of the deepest pathos, all conducted with dramatic skill, and with powerful bursts of strong passion."⁵⁶

Der neunundzwanzigste Februar, (1812), Die Schuld, König Ingurd (1817), and Die Albaneserin (1820) are singled out as examples of Müllner's mastery of technique. The article ends with an answer to the criticisms of immorality that had often been levelled against German literature. The first charge, that German letters propagate what was then familiarly known as "French philosophy," the author

⁵⁵ Ibid., 289.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 295.

regards to be a contradiction in terms. For the "irreligious and immoral doctrines" of the French philosophers are diametrically opposed to the "passion, sentiment, idealism, and wild imagination" of the Germans. The second charge is that German dramas often depict vice in alluring colours and thus make it appear attractive. A whole University, the criticism goes, after witnessing a play, "went forth to rob on the highway." Miss Austin counters this criticism with the observation that such results need only be feared in Germany. Moreover, she believes that "few stages or private rooms can afford a company of more perfectly virtuous characters than the Dramatis Personae of Die Albaneserin, whose delineation, even when reason and religion teach us to disapprove of some of their actions, gives a sense of exaltation to human nature." She does not deny, on the other hand, that at times there is a regrettable lack of didacticism in the German drama. Goethe himself is a "reprehensibly immoral writer." Still, a moral lesson, or at least "a moral influence," can be found in almost "every delineation of the human heart," and by way of summing up, Miss Austin declares that there is a good deal of such morality in the better portion of German dramas.⁵⁷

Very much the same note of praise was struck by Lockhart as early as 1819, in his review of Müllner's Die Schuld. Müllner was viewed as the regenerator of the German theatre which, since the death of Schiller and the silence of Goethe, had been flooded with "tame, stale, spiritless copies" of The Robbers and Götz. "If wisely directed

57 Ibid., 298.

by himself and sustained by the favour of his countrymen," Müllner may be destined, Lockhart holds, to fill the existing chasm. "What would we not give," he exclaims enthusiastically, "to see such a genius among ourselves bestowing all the fire and free energies of his youth upon our own drama."⁵⁸ The play's "many excellences" are extolled with uncritical ardour. The insight with which Müllner probes into the "most hidden mysteries of the human soul," the "profoundness" of his observations about man's destiny--such elements, Lockhart exaggerates--were "never perhaps embodied in any German drama with so much consistent and uniform seriousness of thought, purpose and expression." It is difficult, nowadays, to account for such inordinate praise of what must be considered, at best, mediocre. Robert F. Arnold, in his attempt to explain Müllner's popularity in Germany, writes:

Uns bleibt gleichwohl das Entzücken, die Begeisterung der grossen Mehrheit der Zeitgenossen rätselhaft. Waren sie blind gegenüber der absurden und verzwickten Vorgeschichte . . . waren sie, neben denen Goethe lebte, taub gegen die greulichen Verse? unempfindlich gegen die fortwährend hart am Rand des Lächerlichen hinschreitende, bald gequält-pathetische bald hausbackene Sprache? gegen die frei nach "Handschuh," "Glocke," dem Hamletmonolog bearbeiteten Tiraden . . .? Selten war ein so ungeheuerer Erfolg so wenig verdient.⁵⁹

Lockhart accords high praise also to Gillies whose translation of the excerpts proves that he is "not merely a skilful versifier but a genuine poet." The translation, aiming at literalness, is indeed quite successful in evoking the eery mood of the original.

⁵⁸ [J. G. Lockhart] "Horae Germanicae I. Guilt; or The Anniversary. A Tragedy from the German of Müllner," Blackwood's, VI(1819), 121.

⁵⁹ Robert F. Arnold, Das Deutsche Drama (München, 1925), pp. 552-553.

You know not yet
The ways of northern spirits. It is true,
Beyond your Pyrenees, guitars may breathe
From shadowy hollows, and terrific steeps,
Prophetic music. But in these cold realms
Spirited guests another language hold.--
Down through the chimney's narrow throat the winds
All blow with swelling cheeks. Then all the doors
At once fly open:--hands invisible
Extinguish every light. The affrighted stork,
Screaming departs from the devoted house.
The roof-tree cracks, portending sudden fall;--
Owls, great as eagles, at the window peck,
While in the chimney corner, spitting fire,
Black cats are stationed; and at last behold,
Dancing in flames of blue and green, appears--
Even a whole armament of images from hell.⁶⁰

Ihr kennet
Nicht der nord'schen Geister Weise.
Jenseits der Pyrenäen
Mögen Zitherklänge wehen
Aus den unsichtbaren Höhen,
Und den schauerlichen Tiefen,
Wo die Zukunft wird gewoben.
--Anders spricht die Geisterwelt
Diesseits des beeisten Belt.
In des Schornsteins engem Lauf
Bläst der Wind mit vollen Backen.
Alle Thüren springen auf,
Und die Tragebalken knacken.--
Eulen, gross wie Adler, hacken
An die Fenster, schwarze Katzen
Sprühen Funken im Kamin.
Und ein Heer von Teufelsfratzen⁶¹
Tanzt in Flammen blau und grün.

In 1820, König Yngurd and Der neunundzwanzigste Februar were reviewed by Gillies, who again did the translations. Die Albaneserin (1820), Müllner's last play to be reviewed in "Horae Germanicae", appeared in 1822. The note of praise is sustained throughout.

⁶⁰ [J. G. Lockhart,] "Horae Germanicae I," Blackwood's, VI(1819), 121.

⁶¹ Das Schicksalsdrama, ed. Jakob Minor (Berlin, 1883), p. 357,-- hereafter cited as Schicksalsdrama.

König Yngurd is hailed as the "greatest and most affecting" of all of Müllner's plays, and Der neunundzwanzigste Februar is acclaimed for the "great sublimity and beauty" with which it expresses ideas on the communion between the world of the living and that of the dead-- ideas, which the "clear-sighted, rational, intellectual eye of our self-satisfied age" had completely lost sight of.

Here is an excerpt from Gillies' translation of this play:

Alas! I feel
Misfortune rule me with resistless power,
Even as the wedge that rends the tree is driven,
Deeper and deeper by the heavy axe,
So pain on pain increasing presses on me,
Till my poor heart will break!--Thus I am judged--
'Tis but the punishment I have deserved 62
For having broke mine oath thee to avoid.

Oh! ich fühl's, das Unheil waltet
Unversöhnlich über mir!
Wie der Keil den Stamm zerspaltet,
Immer tiefer für und für,
Von den langsam sichern Hieben
Schwerer Art hineingetrieben;
So auch presset Schmerz auf Schmerz,
Bis es bricht, dies arme Herz.--
So ist's droben zugemessen,
Weil ich hier den Eid vergessen,
Dich zu meiden. 63

As the preceding passage shows, the translation is, except for some minor errors--"resistless power" for "unversöhnlich"--remarkably faithful to the original. In his endeavour to render the German text as precisely as possible into English, Gillies at times becomes guilty of inversions and non-English constructions, as ". . . mine oath thee to avoid."

62 Anon., "Hercæ Germanicae III. The 29th of February, a Dramatic sketch. By Adolphus Müllner," Blackwood's, VI(1820), 397.

63 Schicksalsdrama, p. 307.

Several other plays, reviewed in the pages of "Horae Germanicae," deserve mention here. Gillies' translations and reviews of Theodor Körner's Rosamunde and Iriny (both 1814) appeared in 1820 and 1821 respectively. The tragedies were hailed as works "that would have done honour to the most mature and practiced genius."⁶⁴ Ernst von Houwald, another fate-dramatist, whose play Der Leuchtturm (1821) was reviewed by Gillies in 1823, was introduced as a talented young craftsman whose "besetting error . . . has been his choice of frightful and repelling subjects . . . and overstrained plots."⁶⁵ However, a few years later, in 1829, Houwald's Das Bild (1821) was reviewed quite unfavourably.⁶⁶ Werner's Der vierundzwanzigste Februar (1815), which set the fashion of the fate tragedy, was also well received, Gillies bestowing exaggerated praise upon the "celebrated Werner" by stating: "As long as the German language exists, Werner will be remembered with respect, not indeed for this poem alone, but for others which are more translatable."⁶⁷ When this review appeared in 1827, the popularity of the fate tragedy had almost run its course on the German stage, and in 1829, when Werner's Attila, König der Hunnen (1808) was unfavourably reviewed,⁶⁸ this genre had lost its appeal for the British reading

⁶⁴ [R. P. Gillies], "Horae Germanicae IX. Rosamunda, C. T. Körner," Blackwood's, VIII(1820), 45.

⁶⁵ [R. P. Gillies], "Horae Germanicae XV. The Light Tower, a Tragedy by Ernst Houwald," Blackwood's, XIII(1823), 3.

⁶⁶ Anon., "Das Bild, A Tragedy from the German of Ernst Houwald," Blackwood's, XXVI(1829), 1.

⁶⁷ [R. P. Gillies], "Horae Germanicae XXIV. Werner's 24th of February," Blackwood's, XXI(1827), 464.

⁶⁸ Blackwood's, XXVI(1829), 289.

public as well.

While two other plays were reviewed favourably during the third decade of the century--Klingemann's Faust (1815)⁶⁹ and Uhland's Herzog Ernst von Schwaben (1818)⁷⁰--by the end of the twenties strong criticism of the German drama was expressed. Without the support for German literature by Gillies who, in 1828, had left the magazine to assume editorship of the Foreign Quarterly Review, such criticism is found even within the pages of Blackwood's. The plays reviewed in 1829 were criticised for their "mannerism and mechanism," their "bombastic inflation of the sentimental and the revolting," and their portentous length which might exhaust even German endurance."⁷¹ Still stricter censure was expressed by Carlyle in the same year in the Foreign Review,⁷² and its adverse effect on the reception of German literature in England can no longer be disputed.⁷³ John Wilson's remark, notable because it deals with one of the best known works in German literature, may serve as an example of this new attitude: "The idolators of Goethe dismiss Shakespeare . . . with some impatient flourish about the beauty of his plumage, and falling on their foolish faces before Faust, break out

⁶⁹ Blackwood's, XIII(1823), 649.

⁷⁰ Blackwood's, XXI(1827), 214.

⁷¹ Anon., "Das Bild, a Tragedy from the German," Blackwood's, XXVI(1829), 1.

⁷² Thomas Carlyle, "German Playwrights," The Foreign Quarterly and Continental Miscellany, III(1829), quoted in Ernest Reinhold, The Reception of Franz Grillparzer in England During the Nineteenth Century (diss. Michigan, 1956), 7-16,--hereafter cited as "Reinhold."

⁷³ Reinhold, p. 16.

into worship in the gabble of the unknown tongue."⁷⁴

It is not surprising, then, that of the few plays reviewed in Blackwood's from 1830 on, hardly any were noted favourably. Raupach's Die feindlichen Brüder was cited as an example of the German disposition "to laugh merrily and whatever they cannot understand,"⁷⁵ and Tieck's Ritter Blaubart (1797) was considered altogether inadequate: "His plummet was too short to fashion so profound a character."⁷⁶ Körner, praised earlier, is now also reviewed unfavourably.⁷⁷ The remark of one critic reflects not only the tenor of his own review of Ernst Raupach's Hohenstauffen, but the critical attitude prevailing at the time: "The condition of the German theatre has, indeed, for some time past resembled our own; there has been a profusion of dramatic productions, but an extreme penury of high or original talent."⁷⁸

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, only two really noteworthy translations of German plays appeared in Blackwood's. These were the Second Part of Faust (1886) and Wallensteins Lager (1892). Both translations were executed by Sir Theodore Martin, probably the best translator to work for Blackwood's in the nineteenth century. The introductory paragraph asserts that, after the versions of Anster, Bayard Taylor, and Miss Swanwick, this was "at least the fourth time"

⁷⁴ "Noctes Ambrosianae," Blackwood's, XXXVI(1834), 269.

⁷⁵ Blackwood's, XXXVIII(1835), 513.

⁷⁶ Blackwood's, XXXIII(1833), 206.

⁷⁷ Anon., "Hedwig, a Drama by Theodor Körner," Blackwood's, XLII(1837), 266ff.

⁷⁸ Blackwood's, XLIII(1838), 137.

that a rendering of the Second Part of Faust has been attempted in England. Although the previous translators have produced "a readable and poetical Second Faust," the reviewer believes that Sir Theodore Martin's "Second Faust surpasses the versions previously given to the English public." In fact, Faust is now "almost as accessible to the English as to the German reader." On the other hand, the reviewer feels that the Second Part of Faust will never gain the popularity of Faust I, for here Goethe chooses to address not "the world" but a "select coterie." For example, there are altogether too many "obscure allusions to literary schools" and too much "somewhat ponderous learning."⁷⁹ In spite of that, the reviewer admits, there is much "real enjoyment" to be found in the Second Part. Martin's rendering of the almost untranslatable rhythms is eminently successful. Even a short excerpt will testify to its quality:

Here the outlook is free,
The spirit aspiring!
Women I yonder see
Floating up, quiring.
Midmost, in wondrous sheen,
Star-crowned and beaming,
Lo! there is heaven's queen,
Gloriously gleaming!⁸⁰

Hier ist die Aussicht frei,
Der Geist erhoben.
Dort ziehen Frauen vorbei,
Schwebend nach oben.
Die Herrliche mitteninn
Im Sternenkranze,
Die Himmelskönigin,
Ich seh's em Glenze.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Anon., "The Second Part of Faust," Blackwood's, CXXXIX (1886), 724.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 731.

⁸¹ Goethes Sämtliche Werke, XIV, 282.

The translation of Wallensteins Lager was designed to supplement Coleridge's unfinished version of the trilogy. It is, as all of Martin's translations, of high poetic quality.

By way of summary, one can say that, as the century progressed, the readers of Blackwood's began to take less and less interest in the German drama, taken as a whole. After 1830, reviews of German plays became rarer, shorter, and less laudatory, until, toward the turn of the century, they disappeared altogether. The attitudes to individual authors and to the drama in general, were determined by the needs of the society. Living in an era of tremendous changes where old values were constantly being destroyed, the average reader demanded of his periodical literature that it supply him with concrete norms, that it tell him what to think, and that it put him at ease. The drama, as all literature, had to teach moral truth indirectly; it had to be exemplary and inspiring rather than didactic and dogmatic. The "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling," to which the Romanticists had subscribed, was now decidedly frowned upon. Jeffrey summed up the reaction against Romanticism when he said of Wordsworth's Excursion, "This will never do." These circumstances account for the popularity--in the second and third decade of the century--of the fate tragedies, for the criticism of immorality and lack of taste brought sometimes against Schiller and almost always against Grillparzer, and for the total neglect of such important playwrights as Kleist, Büchner, Grabbe, and Hebbel. In the last quarter of the century, interest in German drama was largely replaced with interest in German political development.

3. Prose

The conditions underlying the subsequent part of this study differ in some measure from those that characterize the preceding sections. While the translations and articles pertaining to German poetry and drama are confined to relatively few important figures, those dealing with German prose writings tend to be much broader in scope. Besides the major authors, such as Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, and Jean Paul, there is a host of lesser writers who are discussed in Blackwood's. There is also an immense number of tales, stories, romances, and novels--many of them bearing no more than the heading, "from the German"-- which were particularly pronounced favourites with English readers. The articles and reviews pertaining to German prose works, in addition to discussing a great many writers, not infrequently make sweeping judgments about German prose literature with only incidental reference to individual authors.

In view of these considerations, it has seemed advisable to adopt for this chapter a procedure differing somewhat from that of the foregoing sections. Thus, rather than attempting to trace the interest taken in particular authors throughout the century, this part of the study will aim at furnishing a broad and comprehensive picture of the attitude which Blackwood's assumed towards German prose writers and of the changes which became discernible in that attitude as the century drew to a close.

In the early years of its career, Blackwood's exhibited a lively interest in German prose works. The numerous translations

and reviews of stories and novels, the large body of non-narrative prose translations, and the frequency with which German grammars appeared in England--they all testify to the friendly attitude, which, in addition to the other genres of German literature, was shown towards all things German during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. In its discussions of German prose writings, Blackwood's repeatedly struck the note of unqualified admiration. It held that "for many centuries Europe has witnessed no living reputation acquired by literature alone, which could sustain the slightest comparison with that acquired by Goethe,"¹ that E. T. A. Hoffmann was "a man of rare and singular genius,"² that Lessing was "one of those extraordinary minds,"³ and that "the last fifty years have produced in Germany more great and valuable literary works than the last hundred years among all the other nations of Europe."⁴

The Literary Gazette expressed an attitude in 1827 which is also very characteristic of Blackwood's: "A faithful and able translation of any production of merit from the German into English is calculated to enrich our own tongue from the best of sources."⁵ Such a "production of merit" was Schlegel's Lectures on the History of

¹ [J. G. Lockhart], "Observations on the Critique of Goethe's Life in the Edinburgh Review," Blackwood's, IV(1818), 211.

² Anon., "The Devil's Elixir, by E. T. A. Hoffmann," Blackwood's, XVI(1824), 55.

³ Thomas de Quincey, "Laokoon, or, the Limits of Poetry and Painting," Blackwood's, XVI(1824), 312.

⁴ Anon., "Remarks on Schlegel's History of Literature," Blackwood's, III(1818), 497.

⁵ Morgan and Hohlfeld, p. 62.

Literature, Ancient and Modern, which had appeared in England in 1818 in a translation by Lockhart, and was reviewed in Blackwood's in the same year. The anonymous reviewer begins by asserting that, in spite of the great progress which German literature has seen in the recent past, the German writers are "pretty free from that overweening self-complacency which is so visible in the writings of their French and English brethren."⁶ He attributes this to the fact that the great German writers are also great scholars; "they read before they think of writing. Their reverence for others tempers their confidence in themselves." A consequence of this is, of course, that "their books are too full of learning for our public, in its present state; they make allusions which our wits would laugh at as obscure, and pass into digressions which they would censure as absurd." Nevertheless, the author declares, "they are worth the studying, and will repay the labour. . . ." He feels that such books as Schlegel's Lectures are valuable in counteracting the revolutionary trends in political, moral, and religious institutions which the philosophers of the eighteenth century had propagated. "They strove to represent every thing beyond their own sphere, as existing only in prejudice, and held sacred only by folly." Speaking of the present the writer finds: No one seems to have contemplated the tendency of this age with more concern than Frederick Schlegel His study--"a noble effort . . . to arouse forgotten thoughts and despised feelings, and to make man be national and religious once more, in order that once more they may be great" --

⁶ Blackwood's, III(1818), 497.

is believed to constitute an eminently valid assessment of existing conditions. The author agrees with Schlegel that it is from the realm of literature that the regenerative influence must proceed. In his advocacy of Schlegel's "cure," he provides a comment on the lack of order and homogeneity which characterized early Victorian literary criticism. Schlegel's message to England, he reiterates, is particularly great, for he

inculcates, throughout, the necessity which there is, that literature should have reference to an established centre, namely to religious faith, and to national history and strengthen our association in relation to these objects,--and that, instead of being applied at random as a stimulus to our faculties and emotions, as mere abstract human beings, it should bend all its power towards tutoring and forming the feelings of men, destined to act a part as citizens of their respective communities. In doing so, literature gains, both by having a determinate purpose, and by being the conservator of associations, which grow more and more valuable as they grow older.⁷

The author frankly admits that Schlegel's work is greatly superior to most of the British products of the day. "Upon the whole," he concludes, "we consider this work as by far the most rational and profound view of the history of literature which has yet been presented to Europe; and when we compare it with the ideas concerning the same subject which are commonly circulated in this country, it is easy to perceive that another nation has got the start of us in point of reflection, and is also much wiser in point of feeling."⁸

This uncritical acceptance of things German continued until

7 Ibid., 499-500.

8 Ibid., 512.

the early 'twenties. In 1818, when the Edinburgh Review published a rather disparaging article about Goethe, Lockhart came to his idol's defense and severely censured Jeffrey and his review for his "de haut en bas" criticism characterized by "empty arrogance and very offensive irreverence."⁹ His article reads more like an exercise in hagiology, than like a serious attempt at evaluating the poet's work. In his desire to invalidate the strictures of the Edinburgh Review, Lockhart could not resist the temptation to exaggerate his position. But in 1824, when Carlyle's admirable translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister (1795) was published, Lockhart restated his opinion in considerably cooler terms in his review of the novel. "It is very possible," he admits now, "that in the excess of our indignation against his Goethe's ignorant or incapable detractors, we may have been betrayed into laudation rather extravagant of Goethe himself--or, at least, into language not unlikely to receive this sort of interpretation among calm and uncontroversial critics. And we, therefore, make no apology for stating, on this occasion, our opinion of him as it is."¹⁰ Although Goethe's greatness cannot, of course, be denied, Lockhart feels that it would be quite erroneous to place him--as some critics have done--on the same level with Homer and Shakespeare. "Few things can be more ridiculous" than such an attempt, he declares. There are, in fact, "not a few names" who might aspire to such an honour "with considerably less of absurdity than that of Goethe or any other German."¹¹

⁹ Lockhart, op. cit. (above note 1), p. 212.

¹⁰ Blackwood's, XV(1824), 619.

Milton and Dante, for example, "are poets of an altitude by miles and miles ultra-Goethean, and--as yet--ultra-German." Lockhart is somewhat baffled by the question whether Goethe is to be assigned the first place among his contemporaries or not, but "that the place he does occupy is, however, a high, a very high one--is most indisputable."¹¹

Among the other writers of fiction who enjoyed great popularity in those early years in Blackwood's history, were Schiller, E. T. A. Hoffmann, the Grimm brothers, de la Motte Fouqué, and his wife, Caroline. Schiller's now forgotten Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre and Spiel des Schicksals were published in translation in 1818¹² and 1821¹³ respectively. The Baroness de la Motte Fouqué whose story, Der Zypressenzweig, appeared in 1820 was praised by Gillies as a fresh literary talent, while her husband--his tale, Das Schauerfeld, saw publication in the same year--was hailed as a great prose master. "Few writers of his day," says Gillies in his review, "write more purely and more energetically."¹⁴ An historical romance, Walther von Aquitanien, which relates the overthrow of the heroic house of the Nibelungs, appeared anonymously in 1822; it is praised for its "antique simplicity, rudeness and strength."¹⁵

Die Elixiere des Teufels, Hoffmann's horror story, was published in 1824. The reviewer calls it his "chief favourite among the numerous works of

¹¹ Ibid., 622.

¹² "Christian Wolf, a True Story," Blackwood's, III(1818), 679-689.

¹³ "The Sport of Fortune, a Fragment--From a True Story," Blackwood's, VIII(1821), 375-381.

¹⁴ [R. P. Gillies] "The Field of Terror, a Tale," Blackwood's, VIII(1820), 131-138.

¹⁵ "Walther of Aquitaine," Blackwood's, IX(1822), 379.

a man of rare and singular genius." He admires the "unrivalled effect" which the work achieves and attributes it "to nothing so much as the admirable art with which the author has married dreams to realities, the air of truth which his wildest fantasies draw from the neighbourhood of things which we all feel to be simply and intensely human and true."¹⁶

A thorough discussion of German narrative literature is found in the review in 1826 of Gillies' three-volume collection of German Stories. After congratulating Gillies on his "judicious choice of stories and truly admirable style of translation," the reviewer makes some exceedingly interesting remarks about German fiction in general. He protests that English readers are tired of the infernal stories of Hoffmann or of Körner, and that, because of poor selections made by translators, they are losing interest in German translations. A good translator, the author holds, must not confine himself to mere translating; he must also select. And among the things he must not select, are German novels of manners. For one thing, "German manners are in a bad taste, mean and coarse," for another, the Germans are bad delineators of manners generally--"whether coarse or not." There are several things he finds objectionable in German manners as they are reflected in the current narrative literature. First, German stories are characterized by a total absence of cosmopolitanism, there is about them certain "kleinstadtigkeit, or country-townishness" that is most baffling to a mature reader. Second, there is an unmistakable "effeminacy in the German mind." A German stripling, for example, will persist in

¹⁶ Anon., "The Devil's Elixir," Blackwood's, XVI(1824), 55-67.

referring to his parent as "dear little fatherling!" Such exhibitions, the author reasons, quite apart from being of an unpardonable levity, testify to a "defect of that masculine tone in their sensibilities."¹⁷ Although the Germans cannot be regarded as a "sensual people,"--to say that would be "doing them great injustice"--they have a tendency to fall "in love" at the slightest provocation. This, again, is an example of their unseemly behaviour. In view of such considerations, the German novel of manners cannot possibly present any agreeable subjects for contemplation.

Another genre from which the English translator must abstain, is the German novel of sentiment. Such literature, the reviewer claims, is characterized by "extravagant silliness" and does not constitute suitable reading matter for Englishmen. Jean Paul--the only exception--"alone has united great strength and originality of feeling with a very masculine understanding," but he is all but untranslatable. The English translator must confine himself, therefore, to the novels of incident and regular plot. Here, however, he must be careful to avoid "the monstrous in every mode of manifestation, which tyrannizes over the German novel of this class."¹⁸ Furthermore, the reviewer dismisses Fouqué as an "inspired idiot," but believes that Laun and Tromlitz--not known even by name now--are writers of great talent!

Such literary criticism had been taken seriously by the journal's readers, and can be regarded as a revealing comment on Victorian puritanical ideals. Significantly enough, charges of immorality,

¹⁷ Blackwood's, XX(1826), 844.

¹⁸ Ibid., 85¹⁴.

horror, sentimentality, extravagance, formlessness, and indecency, which have been noted earlier particularly with reference to the German drama, were to be brought against German fiction with increasing frequency during the next few years. John Wilson, under the pseudonym of "Christopher North," uttered some especially scathing criticisms of German literature in his "Noctes Ambrosianae" column in the April issue of 1832. Surveying the progress German literature had made in England, he writes:

German literature is well in its way, and Maga [as Blackwood's Magazine was familiarly known] was the first periodical work in this country that did anything like justice to it. She confined not herself to mere criticism, but gave specimens--translations of many of the finest things executed in the finest style by Lockhart, De Quincey, Gillies, Blair, Mrs. Smythe, Mrs. Busk, and other ladies and gentlemen of genius and erudition, who in general improved upon their originals, often changing geese into swans, and barn-door fowls into birds of Paradise.¹⁹

While this is quite an amusing recollection, it is at the same time possible that Wilson was expressing a reaction to the cult of things German which had then reached its apex. His observations on Goethe seem to support this conclusion.

It is indeed laughable to hear absurd and muddy dunces acknowledge in jargon that would have seemed queer even among the builders of the Tower of Babel on the day of the confusion of tongues, the obligations their intellects, forsooth, aye, their intellects, labour under to the 'Illustrious Sage.'²⁰

Two years later, in 1834, ²¹ he mocks in very much the same tone, at

¹⁹ Blackwood's, XXXI(1832), 694.

²⁰ Ibid., 695.

²¹ "Noctes Ambrosianae," Blackwood's, XXXVI(1834), 268.

those of his country-men who are awe-struck by the greatness of Goethe and quite forget their own literary masters. "The creatures," he says, "hope to acquire character by acquaintance with the drivell of German dotage; and, going at once to the fountainhead, gabble about Goethe--'The Master!'" Placing the achievements in the realm of literature of the two countries side by side, he asserts that Germany "cannot bear comparison--for a moment--in greatness--with England." Where, he asks, are the German Miltons, Drydens, Wordsworths, and Byrons? What period in the literary development of Germany can compare with "that glory of the golden days of good Queen Bess?" Of all German poets Schiller is the best. "His *Wallenstein* is a fine drama." But even this statement requires qualification. It is rather

the work of a great mind than of a great genius. His soul was familiar with exalted sentiments, and beheld the grandeur of the character of him he chose to be his hero. But Schiller had no creative imagination. If he had, it at least gave forth few products; his muse had to follow the muse of history; and even then had power given to her over no wide range of events or variety of characters. He was no Shakespeare.²²

The discussion ends with "Christopher North" reasserting the superiority of the English over the Germans in the "Philosophy of Taste" and in all the fine arts except music. Music, being "sensuous rather than intellectual or moral," is, of course, not a natural means of expression for the English genius.

Besides being a reaction to the vogue of German literature, such criticism is indicative of a peculiarly Victorian phenomenon. Nineteenth-century England has often been charged with undue complacency

²² Blackwood's, XXXI(1832), 698.

and self-admiration. However one-sided this censure may be, it cannot be denied that it is in a considerable measure justified. North's assertion of England's superiority in the fine arts, and especially his remark about music, clearly reflect this attitude.

In the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, there was a marked slackening of interest in German prose writing. Only a few anonymous stories "from the German" appeared in Blackwood's. An article on Tieck, from the year 1837, is however significant. The author explains the "extravagantly eulogistic terms in which it has been the practice of late to speak of Tieck, both in his country and among ourselves," by contrasting his achievements with the "somewhat sinking state of German literature." He admits that he finds it rather difficult to subscribe to the "hyperbolical praises of Tieck" by those who "are pleased to make his name and the merits of his works a kind of literary shibboleth." Although he has nothing but admiration for the moral courage with which Tieck has opposed "those principles of mock liberalism in politics, and of licentiousness and moral cynicism in literature, which it has been the object of the unprincipled school of Heine and Gutzkow to disseminate in Germany," he cannot deny that as a literary artist, Tieck is often "puerile and trivial, or extravagant and capricious in the highest degree."

Would anyone believe that a man of ability--a man of critical refinement and judgment, affecting the deepest annoyance at the heretical tastes of the age in literature and philosophy--could gravely think of curing the errors of which he complains by such a piece of utter driveline as this Vogelscheuche . . . ? It is really impossible gravely to go through the detail of rubbish such as this, which, if meant to be ludicrous, is certainly the most tragic

mirth we were ever doomed to peruse.²³

The critic holds that Tieck excels as a teller of fairy-tales. His Genoveva and his Emperor Octavian--though both "in a linked sweetness too long drawn out"--represent Tieck at his very best. They are pervaded by soft, luxurious grace and kindly feeling.

The constant praise of "every thing German" provoked "Christopher North," in 1839, to a nineteen-page diatribe against German literature. In an article entitled "Discourse on Goethe and the German," he ridicules those "blockheads, male and female, who know nothing of the subject, and take all that the Germans themselves advance for gospel."²⁴ "Hundreds of young ladies can repeat stanzas of Gleim and Uz, who have never read a line of Spenser in their lives." Just one glance at the literature of Germany is enough to convince him that all this admiration is totally unjustified. The literature, he says, began with Gottsched, "the weakest of mortals, the poorest of versifiers, the most miserable of pedants;" followed by Wieland, Klopstock, Gessner, Gellert, Rabener--"pretty men for a nation to be proud of!" North sees the reason for the extravagantly high opinion, which the Germans have formed of their literature, in the "profundity of the abyss they were sunk in before it made its appearance."

People in a coal-pit see the smaller stars at mid-day as plain as if each of them were of the first magnitude . . . so when the Leipzig public had fallen into the depth of Gottschedism, no wonder that, on the first rising of Wieland, they considered him the sun in heaven. Then shone Klopstock, Lessing, Schiller, Goethe forming--as seen from that subterranean level--a whole planetary system. But

²³ Anon., "The Life of a Poet," Blackwood's, XLII(1837), 39⁴.

²⁴ Blackwood's, XLV(1839), 2⁴7.

for us English, to look up to such lights--to talk of them in the same century with our own--or to think that they are fitted to be classed with those glorious constellations that illumine the British sky, and shed their glory over all lands--the thing is beyond joke--²⁵ 'tis monstrous.

North criticises current German fiction on two grounds. First he turns against the inordinate length of German narratives. "Did any human being ever succeed in getting to the end of a German novel of ordinary life, without a weariness of the flesh that suggested indistinct thoughts of suicide? No one!" Then, he directs his strictures against the immorality of German fiction. "Their books . . . are not only stupid but disgusting--I have met with very few that were not positively shocking from the insight they gave me into the depravity of a whole people."²⁶ Goethe--that "cold-blooded, selfish, sensual old man--in his Faust is, of all offenders, the worst. North is incapable of understanding how

every human being, from about eighteen up to twenty-five, and some, even, who have come to years of discretion, have got into a perpetual sing-song of wonder and awe about the depth, grandeur, sublimity, and all the rest of it, of this inimitable performance. Did they ever think of extending their enumerations of its merits to include its profanity, coarseness, vulgarity, and unintelligibleness? What are we to think of a work, that, in the life-time of its author, needed commentaries on almost every page?²⁷

Alarmed at the popularity of this work among Englishmen, North dreads the effects it might have on the country's morality. Nothing good can surely come of it, he feels, for "over all is spread such a dung-heap

²⁵ Ibid., 250.

²⁶ Ibid., 265.

²⁷ Ibid., 249.

of vile sensationalism and immorality, that you fear for the health of the surrounding inhabitants; for such nauseous exhalations must bear pestilence in every breath." The only distinction, he sums up cynically, to which Goethe is, indeed, entitled, is that of having so faithfully depicted the habits and "everyday modes of thought" of his country men; in that respect, he deserves "all the praises they give him."

It is obvious that from such a bias no understanding for a work like Goethe's Faust could be expected. Scurrilous criticism of this kind can only be fully understood if it is regarded in the light of the social and religious background of the time. The steady infiltration of evangelical religion into all classes of society, during the first thirty years of the century, effected many changes in habits of life and thought. Simultaneously, a change in manners took place--from licence and gaiety to hypocrisy or to virtue. As a favourable soil for greater "seriousness" was thus being prepared, critics became increasingly alarmed at the more or less steady influx of German literature. Warning voices, raised to guard against the dissemination of subversive ideas, are indicative of the general uneasiness felt in conservative centres. The danger was heightened for them by the knowledge that English writers, influenced by German literature and thought, were helping to propagate these injurious ideas.

The fact that German influence was preponderant, that German literature was very much "the fashion of the day," and that it was exerting a profound influence upon English men of letters, was confirmed in an article in 1841. Its author declares that "we have a kind of in-dwelling Germanism at home, which is very powerful, and has many

names." He cites Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Carlyle as being among those writers who were "undeniably German." However, this does not shake his conviction that German literature is infinitely inferior to that of England:

None but a very Teutomaniac will maintain that German poetry . . . does in any branch rival, much less surpass, our own. It is less masculine, less tasteful, less healthy, less rounded, less national than the Greek; no impartial person will even say, that, in respect of grace, vigour, and a well-rounded totality, it is not inferior to the Italian and to the French.²⁸

On the other hand, he admits that "the Germans not only compile the best works on all subjects from the best authorities, but they also, of the best works in all languages, ancient and modern, make the best translations." The German language deserves to be studied therefore by all those who aspire after comprehensive scholarship. This, the author admits, is notoriously difficult, for the style in which the German scholars choose to express their ideas, is well-nigh unreadable. In mock despair, he cries out: "Oh, if our German neighbours would only learn to write short sentences!" The same writer goes on to observe that, in spite of its remarkable scholarship, there is a curious dichotomy about the German mind. In their imaginative literature, the Germans "overflow with the purest milk of human kindness, swim in the most billowy intoxication of enthusiasm, melt, even the most manful of them, into womanish tears, and are otherwise 'sentimental' and very 'German.'" For that reason their lyric poetry may be the "richest,

²⁸ Anon., "Traits and Tendencies of German Literature," Blackwood's, I(1841), 143.

perhaps, in the world; in some points perhaps the best: but it is not for us . . . It is too cloudy, too tearful, too shadowy, for the beef-eater. It wants brawn--ay brawn, and blood, and lustihood." It is therefore not for their poetry, nor for their philosophy, that the Englishman should study German, but for their speculation and erudition--"the best thing the Germans have done, and a thing perfectly unique." He exhorts his countrymen: "With Carlyle and the Germans, you must be content to wade a little while painfully at the bottom of a deep, heavy, sometimes gusty sea of smoke; but keep your breath until you reach a certain height, and you will see notable things--perchance encounter gods".²⁹

In spite of this denigration of German imaginative literature in favour of German scholarship, interest in literature was not entirely a thing of the past. Jean Paul still enjoyed a measure of success. This was primarily due to the fact that, although he was "a regular German of the Germans," his novels were not "made up of mere playful arabesques to amuse, of mere pepper and spices to stimulate," but were designed to edify and teach. A novel by Jean Paul "is in fact a sermon; an evangelic address, where the gospel is preached, as wit is vented in the old drama, oftentimes by a clown."³⁰ For this reason, Jean Paul was a writer whom, "notwithstanding (perhaps partly by reason of) his faults and eccentricities, we love, and honour, and clasp to our true

²⁹ Ibid., 161.

³⁰ Anon., "The Life of Jean Paul Richter," Blackwood's, LXII(1847), 33.

British breast with a genuine feeling of brotherhood." He is admired for his vast and various erudition, "the profoundness of his philosophy," and "hard laboriousness and indefatigable perseverance."

A genuine German! A German in imagination; oh, Heaven! he literally strikes you blind with skyrockets and sunbeams . . . and circumnavigates your brain with a dance of nebulous Brocken phantoms, till you seriously doubt whether you are not a phantom yourself; a German for kindness and simplicity and true-heartedness--a man having his heart always in his hand, and his arms ready to be thrown round every body's neck . . . a German for devoutness of heart, and purity of unadulterated evangelic feeling . . . a real Christian.³¹

After 1850 German literature met with a rather mixed reception. The opinion expressed was that there was some justification for hope of a gradual revival after the political upheavals of the preceding years. And the following decade saw a review with extracts of the Nibelungenlied,³² in a new translation by a Mr. Lettsom, a favourable discussion of Freytag's novel Soll und Haben (1855),³³ and an article on the German language.³⁴ Germany, it is declared there, "is the great European . . . thought factory. She makes thoughts and theories for the world as Manchester does printed calicoes, and other nations wear them. . . . There is no European language so perfect in itself as the German . . . it resembles Greek especially in its power of composition and variety of inflexion."³⁵

³¹ Ibid., 34.

³² Blackwood's, LXIX(1851), 55-69.

³³ "Debit and Credit," Blackwood's, XXCIII(1858), 57-74.

³⁴ Anon., "Characteristics of Language," Blackwood's XCI(1861), 360-75.

³⁵ Ibid., 360.

To be sure, criticisms of German prose were still being expressed. It was variously too "laborious," "obscure," and "gründlich." Tieck, for example, "never rises to the surface for very profundity-- aus lauter Gründlichkeit,"³⁶ while Jean Paul requires "very strenuous application, and an almost superhuman patience."³⁷ In addition, there was a sad lack of humour among the Germans. "I cannot imagine a drearier thing than a German joke," writes one disillusioned commentator.³⁸

Other references to German literature were highly favourable. The reviewer of J. Sime's Lessing, His Life and Writings is baffled by the change which had come over German literature within "one age." "complete destitution" had been replaced with "overflowing wealth," and "now she is the most learned, the most philosophical, the most literary of nations; unrivalled in one field, holding her head high in all, the best scholar, the most profound student in Christendom."³⁹

By 1887, however, the charges of ponderousness, pedantry, and obscurity are reiterated somewhat in the manner of "Christopher North." Ebert's Nilbreut, a reviewer declares, is most definitely not light reading -

Perish the thought! This is verily no pastime to be taken up in a leisure hour, no pleasant meandering in the primrose path of fancy. Rather let the reader here regard himself as an Alpine climber, prepared to grapple with some sublime but uncompromising mountain-crests; let him gird up his loins, set his teeth, and brace himself for the effort, as step by step he prepares

³⁶ Anon., "Jean Paul Richter," Blackwood's, XCIV(1863), 310.

³⁷ Ibid., 312.

³⁸ Anon., Rev. of "Krahwinkel, by Kotzebue," Blackwood's, CIII(1868), 191.

³⁹ Blackwood's, CXIII(1878), 305.

to surmount the formidable obstacle, and he will find himself amply rewarded, when, having scaled the heights, he stands at the top, breathless and panting, to enjoy the view which seemed so long in coming.⁴⁰

An article on "Recent German Fiction" from the year 1893, makes a serious attempt to discuss the merits and defects of German narrative prose. It is argued there that it is precisely those qualities which make the German the eminent scholar he is--patience, industry, conscientiousness, and labour--that prove to be a handicap when he attempts to be entertaining. This accounts for the dearth of really great novelists in Germany: "When we have named the quartet of Sudermann, Franzos, Max Nordau, and Rosegger, we have pretty well exhausted the list of those living novelists that seem to our own limited judgment quite to come up to the A 1 standard."⁴¹ Spielhagen, Ebers, Freytag, and Heyse, on the other hand, fail to measure up to the standard of greatness. But Gerhard Hauptmann--"a young man who has but lately come to the front with a series of short realistic studies"--is considered as a writer of promise. Although his style is not exactly of the kind to "secure for him a wide circle of admirers," his power of characterization is unquestionable masterful. His Bahnwärter Thiel is hailed as a particularly happy creation.

In 1894, Spielhagen's Sonntagskind, Ebner-Eschenbach's Glaubenslos (1893), Franzos' Der Wahrheitssucher, and Ganghofer's Die Fackeljungfrau were reviewed in Blackwood's.⁴² Ganghofer, like

⁴⁰ Anon., Rev. of "Three German Novels," Blackwood's, CXLII(1887), 497.

⁴¹ Blackwood's, CLIII(1893), 87.

⁴² Anon., Rev. of "Recent German Fiction," Blackwood's, CLV(1894), 770.

Franzos, strictly a minor writer, was especially favourably received. Two years later, his famous novel, Schloss Hubertus, was praised for its "overpowering force and brilliancy."⁴³ As the century was drawing to a close, however, more immediate political interests began to crowd purely literary matters into the background, until they disappeared completely.

Throughout the century, Blackwood's criticism of German prose writing tended to vacillate between extreme praise and unjustified denunciation. Much less than in the realm of poetry, it can be said that in the field of prose judgment was arbitrary and erratic. The really great German prose artists of the nineteenth century--Kleist, Stifter, Keller, Meyer, Raabe and Fontane--were not at all represented in the magazine, while writers of lesser stature were highly lauded, more often than not, for the wrong reasons.

⁴³ Anon., Rev. of "Some German Novels," Blackwood's, CLX(1896), 226.

CHAPTER II

PHILOSOPHY

The largest part of German prose writing reviewed in Blackwood's belonged, of course, to the narrative field. But a good deal of attention was also paid to works dealing with philosophical or theological subjects. Not infrequently these works were discussed in conjunction with literature, or were used as the mere starting-point for a discourse about matters ranging from philosophy to literature and from theology to politics.

The chief mediator in this field was Thomas de Quincey. Between 1824 and 1830, a series of five long articles appeared under the heading "Gallery of German Prose Classics" in which Lessing's Laokoon (1766) and several essays by Kant were discussed at length. De Quincey fully realized the importance of Lessing. He calls him "restorer and modern father of German literature" and "founder of criticism for Germany."¹ Germany, he asserted in a previous article, "has always been prolific in men who may be termed 'Catholic scholars'. Regarding philosophy, poetry, the arts and sciences, as productions of the mind, they have never imagined that the knowledge of one of these necessarily excluded that of any of the others." Lessing, he goes on, "was one of those extraordinary minds which are at once comprehensive and minute; . . . the poet, the philosopher and the critic, were united in the happiest way in him."²

¹ Blackwood's, XX(1826), 728.

² "Horae Germanicae XIX," Blackwood's, XVI(1824), 312.

In an article entitled "The Last Days of Kant" of the year 1827, De Quincey gives a short account of Kant's life, evaluates the importance of his work, and attempts to relate it to English thought of the time. After asserting that Kant was the most influential philosopher next to Aristotle, he sets out to account for his relative lack of popularity in England, being apparently quite unaware of the interest of Coleridge and others in the philosopher.³ The first reason he offers, is the language barrier and the scarcity of good translations; furthermore, it is the obscurity of Kant's philosophy that militates against his being understood on a popular level. But most of all, De Quincey declares, it is due to the fact that in a country that is essentially practical any speculative philosophy must necessarily fail.⁴ This idea is elaborated in an article on "Kant in his Miscellaneous Essays" from the year 1830. De Quincey writes: "In an age which, if ever any did, idolatrizes the tangible and the material--the shadowy . . . texture of metaphysics is certainly called into a very disadvantageous comparison." In spite of that, or rather because of it, De Quincey affirms the desirability of Kantian "visionariness" and the salutary influence it might have by way of counteracting materialistic trends of the day. Kant should be studied, he concludes, despite his "complexity . . . carelessness . . . and German prolixity and involution."⁵

A good deal of interest in works of philosophy and theology was shown during the fifth decade of the century. The opinions expressed

³ Schirmer, p. 48ff.

⁴ Blackwood's, XII(1827), 9ff.

⁵ Blackwood's, XXVIII(1830), 244.

on these subjects, however, diverge widely. While some reviewers admire the "width and multiplicity"⁶ of German thinkers, others openly denounce their "plodding, careful, mole-eyed, and unimaginative" approach.⁷ Religion, on the whole, was discussed with a certain reserve. It was felt that

Theology is too sacred ground for us to tread upon, farther than to refuse to be guided first into labyrinths, (which are not to be found in the Bible,) and then out of them, by such misty guides as Tholuck, (Ferdinand) Baur, and Neander. As to Strauss and the other infidels, we name them not without disgust; for if fancy can conjure any image more revolting than another, it is that of a German Voltaire, with all the venom and audacity and not a particle of his wit.⁸

The only figure to be treated with genuine admiration was Luther. Two articles, the first of which appeared as early as 1829 and the second six years later, make a good attempt at assessing the importance of Luther in terms of the influence he has had on posterity. The author calls him "one of those instruments that Providence reserves to awake or restore the hopes of nations," and says that "the mind of Luther was matchlessly adapted for the peculiar work that fell to his share. Enthusiastic, bold, and contemptuous of all consequences to himself, he lived and breathed only for the cause of truth."⁹ Nothing could better sum up Blackwood's attitude to German theology than a passage from an article which had been mentioned in an earlier chapter--

"Traits and Tendencies of German Literature."

⁶ Anon., "Mons. Michelet: History of France," Blackwood's, XLI(1841), 141ff.

⁷ Anon., Rev. of Wolfgang Menzel's The Spirit of History, Blackwood's, XLVII(1840), 154ff.

⁸ Ibid., 154.

⁹ Anon., "Luther," Blackwood's, XXV(1829), 26.

With regard to the state of religion and theology, two remarks will suffice.--First, in respect of religion, it is universally acknowledged that the Germans are the most religious people in Europe--that is, the most instinct with devout feeling, without particular reference to the object of devotion. This, the tone of their literature and of their music equally testifies Nothing was more natural than that, when the political censorship had forbidden men of active intellects to occupy themselves with the affairs of the present life, they should give themselves up with more undivided devotion to pry into the mysteries of futurity. Add to this the memory of Huss, Luther, and Melancthon [sic], and the forty years' reign of Frederick the Great, and you will see clearly how German theology has risen to that Cyclopean vastness which we admire--is instinct with that transcendental magnetism, disturbing the ecclesiastical needle, which we fear. It is quite certain, that to be a profound theologian now, a man must know German, as it is indubitable that a good knowledge of that language will bring a man further, in most theological investigations, in a month, than could be managed without in a year.¹⁰

Concerning German works of philosophy--or "speculation"--there was agreement on only one point: such works were "profound," if not altogether beyond comprehension. Moreover, anything that was "phantastic," "mystical," or in any way out of the ordinary, was immediately identified as the work of a "Teuton" writer. An article reviewing Menzel's Spirit of History expands upon this line of criticism. The author, having detected in the German writers a "convulsive effort . . . to astonish and perplex," explains that this strange preoccupation stems from the fact that these writers suffer from an inferiority complex. They are, in fact, trying to invalidate the charge--so often levelled against them--of being "plodding, careful, mole-eyed, and unimaginative."¹¹ He cannot understand how certain people can confuse

¹⁰ Blackwood's, L(1841), 143.

¹¹ Blackwood's, XLVII(1840), 154.

such idiosyncracies with originality.

This style of writing appears to a great number of people, who have never taken the trouble to analyze the nature of it, to require a very high degree of fancy in the author. But never was such a mistake committed. It is from a want of imagination and not from excess of it, that our neighbours have betaken themselves to their mysticism and magic, to the doublegangers and Peter Schlemihls.¹²

This predilection for the new, startling, and subversive, the author goes on, is by no means limited to works of narrative. It is particularly in the fields of scientific research, scholarship, and philosophy that these elements are most strikingly reflected, and that they exert the most corrosive influence. Philosophy and, above all, metaphysics whose sole aim is "to dazzle . . . with strange speculations, and puzzle . . . with unintelligible paradoxes," are of all offenders the worst. Here is what he thinks of Kant:

Let us not fall foul of Kant . . . he has powerful patrons in these degenerate days, whose slumbering venom it might be dangerous to wake. Let us go to Herder himself, one of the greatest names in German literature--a poet, a scholar, a philosopher, yet tainted so deeply with the spirit of his class and country, that his design is evidently rather to astonish than to instruct.¹³

In the following description of Herder's genius, he seems to be echoing the very style he despises in the German writers:

So irrepressible is genius, that it cannot continue hidden even under the mummy--like endeavours to envelope it--like light in a tomb, it flashes out amid the most gloomy and unpromising scenes, and beautifies, with its lustre, the uninviting objects on which it shines. Herder was undoubtedly a man of genius--he shows it in all his writings; but in them all there is no mistaking the great aim we have alluded to--to startle, to delight; but not to inform.

¹² Ibid., 156.

¹³ Ibid., 158.

Here the author reveals himself as a typical Victorian who views German philosophy and thought with suspicion and dreads the influence it might have on his own society. He regards it as his solemn duty to warn his countrymen against the decadent teachings of German philosophers, and lectures them to reject anything that, instead of "informing" them, merely "delights" them.

There were, to be sure, less disparaging opinions on German philosophy. But not only were they less frequent, they were also less vociferously expressed. An article on the "Life of a Speculative German"--i.e., the physician and philosopher J. B. Erhard--takes a somewhat kindlier view of the subject. The author sets out by remarking on the lack of philosophical inquiry carried on in England, and asserts that the "vast revolution in philosophy, which from the time of Kant, has penetrated the whole framework of life and language in Germany,"¹⁴ is totally non-existent in England. But even here, there is a hint of that characteristic Victorian snobbishness. The author cannot resist observing how preposterous the Germans' preoccupation with philosophy can be, and he goes on: "Philosophy has indeed there created a language of its own--a vast magazine of formal terms, under which every particular may be included; so that all may write if they cannot think scientifically, or with a show of science."¹⁵ The Victorians took great pride in their practicality, and it is of course understandable that they found the pursuit of knowledge for the mere sake of knowledge, such as the German scholars seemed to be engaged in, just a little trivial. The

¹⁴ Blackwood's, XLV(1839), 837.

¹⁵ Ibid., 847.

conclusion of the article, rather than implying criticism of British values, carries implicit contempt for the German scholar to whom knowledge constitutes "the great object of life." The same note is sounded with much greater vigour in a review of C.J. Weber's Deutschland, oder Briefe eines deutschlandreisenden Deutschen, which appeared in 1840. Its author answers Weber's complaint that it is Germany's fate to be overlooked by the world at large by pointing out that such a grievance is unjustified. The German genius--Spinoza is the exemple he mentions--is of such a "retiring" nature that it cannot possibly command the attention of the "great world." "The great world," he goes on, "is too urgently pressed by the necessities of the moment to enter with every erudite Faustus into the chamber of metaphysics, to cite devils: your microscope may be a wonderful discovery; but when I am digging wells and drawing water, I do not care to inquire how many leviathans may be swarming in this or that globule."¹⁶

Although charges of mysticism, speculation, and obscurity directed against German thought and scholarship appeared repeatedly--especially in discussions of German prose--there were no further references to philosophy throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. No mention was made, for example, of such philosophers as Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer. The reasons for this neglect are obvious. An essentially materialistic society that worshipped, what Carlyle called, "the Goddess of Getting-on," must have had very little patience with thinkers whose Weltanschauung was largely idealistic and pessimistic.

¹⁶ Blackwood's, XLVIII (1840), 119.

CHAPTER III

ART AND MUSIC

Although Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine was primarily a literary journal and the large body of material reflecting British interest in German culture, which appeared in it, pertained therefore to the various aspects of German literature, a certain amount of interest in German art and music is apparent. To be sure, references to these fields--interesting and revealing though they often are--occurred irregularly and infrequently, and it would be misleading to make them the basis for generalizations concerning England's view of these arts. As, on the other hand, they will contribute to the completeness of the present study, it seems desirable to deal with them in some detail at this point.

On the whole references to German art were much less favourable than those pertaining to music. Criticism of German painting tended, furthermore, to be less searching. For the most part, the reviewers contented themselves with dismissing German painters with a few contemptuous remarks about their lack of originality and their "cringing servitude to the past."¹ At the very beginning of Blackwood's history the general reaction against the vogue of things French was very much in evidence, and criticism of German painting was therefore less scathing. Thus, in 1818, reviewing an Art Exhibition in Augsburg, a contributor announces "with great pleasure . . . that the rage for everything French has considerably subsided in various parts of the continent," and

¹ Anon., "Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures," Blackwood's, XXCII(1857), 158.

expresses the hope that "so desired a change" will become permanent.²

The next reference to German painting did not appear until 1857, when, in an article entitled "Manchester Exhibition of Art Treasures," the "vigour and originality" of English painters is juxtaposed with the lack of vision and perception of the Germans. The German painters, the author comments mockingly, "have sold themselves to the ancient and dead Italians."³ Although no painters are mentioned by name, one suspects that these strictures are directed against the members of the Romantic School--Caspar David Friedrich and Moritz von Schwind--and Johann Friedrich Overbeck. The charge of unintelligibility, heaviness, and mysticism, so often levelled against German prose writings and philosophy, was extended in 1860 to the realm of German art. "If English art," writes a critic in that year, "be characterized by domestic simplicity, French art by its tragic intensity, German art may be designated as the elaborate product of mystic metaphysics." And he goes on: ". . . as German literature . . . as the German language . . . so has the German art its corresponding idiosyncracy of thought, its relative mannerism of treatment."⁴

Except for a short factual reference to Holbein the Younger and his sojourn in England, which appeared in an article entitled "Historic Portraits," in 1866,⁵ Blackwood's contains no further evidence of British interest in German painting.

² Anon., "Catalogue of Pictures at Augsburg," Blackwood's, IV(1818), 318.

³ Blackwood's, XCII(1857), 158.

⁴ Anon., "Munich, and its School of Christian Art," Blackwood's, XXCVII(1860), 543.

⁵ Blackwood's, 8(1866), 571.

Discussions of German music, on the other hand, are highly complimentary and admiring. It also seems that much interest was taken in this subject. Between 1817 and 1820, for example, eight notices of publication of the works of Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven appeared in the journal, and testify to the popularity of these composers. An article "On Musical Expression," which was published in 1819, was devoted almost in its entirety to the music of Beethoven. It tells of the Editor's visit "with our friend Beethoven, at Mödling near Vienna." The old master, the author reports, "is very deaf still, but seems otherwise in high feather--running about the hills all day, and bringing down notes for innumerable fine things every evening." A "prodigiously beautiful piano forte" which was sent Beethoven from London by a Mr. Broadwood constitutes, the author declares, "a noble specimen of the admiration with which the genius of this great man is regarded in every part of the world."⁶ According to his opinion, Britain is on particularly friendly terms with the world of German music. An excerpt from the Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, which he includes in his essay in order to corroborate his point, is given here:

Vor allem scheint der Charakter der Britten geschaffen, den tiefen Ernst und hehren Aufflug der Beethoven'schen Muse in die Wirmol der Melodien, in seiner ganzen Fülle zu erfassen. Dies zeigt die dauernde Begeisterung, von mit sic den Heros der deutschen Musik würdigen, bewundern, verehren.⁷

In a discussion of Blackwood's attitude to German music, John Wilson's comment in "Noctes Ambrosianae," already referred to

⁶ Blackwood's, V(1819), 697.

⁷ Ibid., 698.

in the section on German prose, comes to mind. "We are their superiors out and out in criticism, and in the philosophy of Teste . . . and in all the Fine Arts, except music. There they excel--why or wherefore I know not--but music, though celestial, is sensuous rather than intellectual or moral, and is a mystery"⁸ Although this somewhat condescending concession of the superiority of German music is not typical of the attitude generally expressed, it is nevertheless indicative of the tendency among a good many critics to belittle everything non-British.

For Mozart, however, the British public had nothing but the most sincere admiration. In a review of The Life of Mozart, Including his Correspondence, by Edward Holmes, the critic presented a highly favourable picture of the composer.⁹ After a short account of his life, the author--rather than giving an analysis of the composer's music--loses himself in a disquisition on the nature of music and the salutary influence it may exert on the minds of people. Then he goes on to reiterate the contemporary theory of art, here applied to music. Music, he explains, must ennoble. The greatest composers have always known this: "Handel was a man of sincere piety, who avowed it to be the object of his compositions not merely to please men, but 'to make them better.'" Haydn, likewise, "was a stranger to every evil and malignant passion; and, indeed, was not much under the influence of passion of any sort." In this strain he goes on to speak about Mozart. Rather than seeing in him a great musician, the author admires his moral qualities. He

⁸ Blackwood's, XXII(1832), 694.

⁹ Blackwood's, LVIII(1845), 572.

dilates, for instance, upon Mozart's "feelings of strong piety," his "generous benevolence . . . good-natured sympathy . . . and extreme kindness of nature." He is at pains to point out that "the vice of ebriety was not among Mozart's failings," and that, except for occasional indulgences" and his "fondness for ballet-dancing," Mozart's life was most exemplary. His love of the ballet, the reviewer explained, "may seem strange to us, who have almost a Roman repugnance to such exhibitions in men of good station. But it is possible that in some minds the love of graceful motion may be a refined passion and an exalted art."

Very much the same note is sounded as late as 1892, when an "Estimate of Mozart" appeared in Blackwood's. Here Mozart is lauded for his "extraordinary industry"--a quality especially dear to progress-loving Victorians--and his ennobling influence. "He has bewitched mankind with his melodies, and every heart and soul is better for his glorious harmonies." But the author also attempts an assessment of Mozart's artistic greatness. "So far as his direct operatic work is concerned," he says, "the secret of its success exists in its exquisite blending of all that was best in Italian procedure with German thought and requirement." Thus, not only has he given Germany her greatest operas in her own tongue, he has also created Italian operatic works "which have outlived, as they outclass, the lyric creations of Italy's own sons." By way of summing up, the author declares that Mozart has done more for music "than any musician that ever lived. Save Beethoven, he is the greatest composer the world has ever seen."¹⁰

¹⁰ Blackwood's, XCII(1892), 37.

Handel was another composer whose name was mentioned with great reverence. A twenty-two page article from the year 1894 gives a detailed account of his life and evaluates his importance largely in terms of the influence he has had on the development of English music.¹¹

Unlike Wilson's patronizing comment, almost all discussions of German music which appeared in Blackwood's are marked by unqualified and sincere admiration. The reason for the consistently high regard in which German music was held can probably be found in its affinity with religion. One contributor, citing Handel, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven as examples, holds that "music, above all the arts, has found in religion its loftiest inspiration." This, he concludes, is even true of Wagner "whose faith a pessimistic philosophy enthusiastical-^{ly} embraced could not destroy."¹² Thus, it can be said in conclusion, it was less for its artistic merits than for its ennobling influence, that German music was admired.

¹¹ Anon., "Handel: Man and Musician," Blackwood's, CLV(1894), 825ff.

¹² Anon., "The Musical Temperament and its Expression," Blackwood's, CLX(1896), 29.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters the attitude of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine towards the various aspects of German culture has been examined, and several conclusions have been reached with respect to them as separate entities. It now remains to synthesize these conclusions, and their underlying facts, into an integrated view of the journal's attitude to things German, and to note any changes in that attitude during the period under investigation.¹ A consideration of non-literary or non-artistic factors--political, social, economical, and cultural in nature--which play an important role in determining one nation's attitude towards another, is also an essential part of this examination.

Although it could not be argued that political conditions are alone responsible for the fluctuations of literary interests, their importance in this respect is not to be underestimated. The two excerpts from the Anti-Jacobin Review, quoted in the Introduction, are revealing examples of the sway which the political apprehensions and aspirations of a nation can exercise over her literary attitudes. A few preliminary remarks, characterizing the political and social scene of Victorian England, will therefore not be out of place in this consideration of Blackwood's view of German literature and thought.

By 1817, when Blackwood's was established, England was well on her way to becoming the greatest political and economic power in the

¹ Please see the "Graphical Representation of References" on p.106.

world. The return of peace in 1815, trade expansion, the establishment of new factories, higher wages--these are the factors which ushered in an era of unprecedented progress and prosperity. To be sure, misery and unrest of a large segment of the population, stemming from over-population, unemployment, intolerable living conditions in the slums and cellar-dwellings was still on the increase, but with gradual reform measures, beginning in 1819 with the act for limiting the hours of child labour to eleven, and culminating with the Reform Bill of 1832, the mood of optimism and confidence became universal. The doctrines of the pursuit of happiness, which Jeremy Bentham had begun to propound earlier, started to bear practical fruit during the years between Waterloo and the Reform Bill. Simultaneously, religious seriousness--probably a remnant of anti-Jacobin panic--spread throughout the country and resulted in an excessive preoccupation with morality. Thus, an individualist commercialism, forever endeavouring to "get on" in profitable business, and an equally individualist type of religion, ostentatiously concerned with "moral" behaviour, combined to produce a breed of self-reliant and reliable men, good citizens in many respects--but "Philistines" in the phrase popularized, in a later generation, by their most famous critic, Matthew Arnold.

This, then, was the reading public to which the new magazines and periodicals catered. And it is essentially in the light of this society that the impact which German literature had on England in the nineteenth century must be viewed. A good deal of the misguided enthusiasm on the one hand, as well as the unfair criticism and faulty

judgment on the other, can be explained in terms of the double standard of morality--a result of the social dichotomy--which prevailed in the England of Queen Victoria. As neither machine industry nor evangelical religion had any use for art or beauty, which were despised as effeminate by the practical-minded makers of the great factory towns, the voice of poetry--unless it was stridently didactic or intimidatingly moralizing--had a difficult time making itself heard above the din of money-making.

Judging from the references in Blackwood's, the flood of German influence which swept over England largely as a result of Madame de Staël's enthusiastic popularizing, Thomas Carlyle's vigorous preaching, and the substantial contributions to various magazines and reviews of such writers as Scott, Coleridge, Gillies, Lockhart, and De Quincey, reached its apex in the period extending from 1817 to the late twenties. The year 1818 marks with twenty-seven references the peak of the journal's interest in German literature. More than any other genre, it was the German fate tragedy which attracted attention in these years. The "Horae Germanicae" column was almost exclusively given over to the propagation of these plays. The uncritical enthusiasm with which they were greeted is, on the one hand, a reflection of their popularity in Germany, and, on the other, an indication of the lack of dramatic production in England. The Romantic genius did not tend toward dramatic expression and a genuine need was felt, therefore, for this genre. This need was filled--at least temporarily--by the mediocre, melodramatic fate tragedies. Poetry and prose, however, were also well represented during these years of lively interest. From the first issue, which carried a translation

of Goethe's ballad "Der Fischer," Blackwood's predilection for this literary form became evident. Although interest in narrative prose centered around tales of horror and mystery, various attempts were made to create an audience for critical and philosophic writings. De Quincey's essays on Lessing and Kant in the twenties are important in this respect.

Beginning in 1827, an unmistakable reaction, such as follows any period of heightened activity, gradually set in. As a consequence of Carlyle's severe censure of the fate tragedians, their plays quickly fell into disfavour with the reading public, and the German drama ceased to occupy a central position in the magazine. While the discontinuation, in 1828, of the "Horae Germanicae" column effected a numerical decrease of references to the German drama, what criticism there was, tended to become progressively unfavourable. Charges of immorality, obscurity, mysticism, and verbosity predominated. John Wilson's scathing remarks about Faust in 1832 reflect the general tenor of Blackwood's dramatic criticism. German prose literature, however, fared even worse. Critics outdid themselves in their denunciations of German heaviness, laboriousness, tediousness, unintelligibility, and intolerable pedantry. The note of disparagement, ranging from playful irony to the bitterest sarcasm, so frequently sounded in discussions of German prose in the fourth and fifth decades of the century, clearly indicates a counter movement to the vogue of things German.

In order to point out how incommensurate the claims made by Germanophiles in favour of German literature were with its actual merits,

reviewers resorted to comparisons of English and German literature. In the forties, doubt was expressed concerning the superiority of German literature over that of France. Thus, an author observes in 1843 that "an outcry has been raised against the French authors and . . . in favour of the Germans, on the grounds of the frightful immorality of the first, and the sound principles of the other." But he disagrees: ". . . as to the assertion that one literature is of a higher tone of morals than the other, it is a mistake."²

Clearly, the period of strong German influence was past. Although writers like Jean Paul were still being praised, German literature as a whole had fallen into disrepute. Indeed, articles were now almost apologetic for the earlier interest which had been shown in German literature, explaining it not in terms of its inherent merit but by the political association of Germany and England during the Napoleonic War. Germany had been the

first nation who honestly and zealously took our part against the enemy . . . and from that time we began studying achs and dochs. . . . to Waterloo we are indebted for peace and freedom, and also for a belief in the truth and talent of a host of German authors, whose principal merit consisted in the fact of their speaking the same language in which Blücher called for his tobacco.³

The reaction against things German was on a broad front and included even German residents of London. In 1842 Blackwood's published a description of the Germans in London. "Your German in London resembles your German anywhere else, heavy, dunder-headed, gross, beer-and-'bacco-

² Anon., "The Two Dreams," Blackwood's, LIV(1843), 672.

³ Ibid., 672ff.

bemuzzled individual, but dogged and steady at his work, patient, and generally trustworthy."⁴ And with reference to the fire in Hamburg, which took place in 1842, a contributor reflects:

But the eventual loss to Hamburg may be repaid by the advantages which the conflagration has given for clearing a most unwholesome and abominable portion of one of the filthiest, most gloomy, and most deformed cities of Europe. . . . (The English we are told are going on improving London) But the Germans will do none of these things--with his pipe in his mouth he will smoke away existence, as his father did before him--bequeath the business of improving to his sons, who will pass through life with their souls wrapped in tobacco fumes, like their predecessors--and transmit the recorded repulsiveness of anything that meets the senses in the length and breadth of Teutschland [sic], untouched by the hand of renovation, to the later ages of mankind.⁵

The review of Karl Julius Weber's travel book, Deutschland, oder Briefe eines in Deutschland reisenden Deutschen (1834), appearing in Blackwood's in 1840, is so representative of the general trend prevailing at the time--both, in mirroring the reaction against German influence, and in expressing the mood of complacency and self-esteem which was, in part, responsible for this reaction--that it deserves to be examined at some length. Casting a retrospective glance at the events that have perpetuated the cult of German literature, the author comments:

Madame de Staël published her Allemagne in 1813--it is now the year 1840. In these seven-and-twenty years, a vast deal has been done in England, in France, and by the Germans themselves, to establish themselves strong in public opinion; and we even see them aspiring here and there to wield the literary sceptre with as lordly a sway as ever graced the dynasty of Voltaire. No one

⁴ Blackwood's, LI(1842), 25.

⁵ Ibid., 25ff.

who is even superficially acquainted with the floating literature of the day, can fail to have observed how flauntingly long-despised Germanism spreads its phylacteries on every side. Thomas Carlyle, the great apostle of the Teutonic gospel, can now afford to leave the serving of tables to deacons, and expound leisurely to admiring assemblies the mysteries of cosmopolitan hero-worship from Odin to Mirabeau. In England, at least, the Germans can no longer reasonably complain that their literature is underrated.⁶

Unlike John Wilson, who was frankly "provoked" by the rise of Germanism, the author of this review ostentatiously declares that he is far from being embittered by the uncritical reception of German literature in England. Ready to see the positive aspects of this situation, he points out that "foreign criticism has become now something better than an echo-chamber for the bandying about of mutual misunderstandings."⁷ On the other hand, he, too, warns against excessive enthusiasm for German literature and reasserts the superiority of that of England. "The Goethe-maniac and Kantian apostles of Germanism, may phrase as mystically as they will; we will not exchange our British soil, whereon we walk erect, for any sublime ballooning, devil knows whither, in the crescent boat of German metaphysics. We will not admit Goethe into partnership with Shakespeare; . . . Goethe himself, (as we learn from Eckermann), had too much sense to forward any such claim." In this strain, the author proceeds to contrast England and Germany: ". . . we will not exchange our classic Edinburgh or our titanic London for any elegant cabinet city of a Carlsruhe, spread out in courtly elegance like

⁶ Blackwood's, XLVIII(1840), 120.

⁷ Ibid., 122.

a lady's fan, in the foreground stiffly adorned with long Lombardy poplars, while behind some dark sombre Schwartzwald [sic], instinct with robbers and hobgoblins, frowns." But for all that, he adds with self-important condescension, "we are willing, with Mrs. Trollope, to scale any heights, and penetrate any mines that may tend to give us a more perfect knowledge of our Teutonic brethren beyond the Rhine, and to cherish a kindly sympathy with their well-being."⁸

It would be pointless to criticise such writers for their blind over-confidence and incredible smugness. One should rather attempt to understand the conditions which gave rise to this attitude. It is true that in the late thirties England had some solid grounds for self-satisfaction. She had beaten the French and was securely supreme on the seven seas. She was the workshop of the world, and had, as yet, no reason to fear industrial competitors. Her empire was the greatest there had ever been, and was still growing. She believed herself to be spreading freedom, enlightenment, and true religion in every place to which her influence extended. Although the nations of the Continent would limp after her, she was sure that they would never catch up with her, for were they not lazy and immoral? Mr. Podsnap summed up the general opinion concerning foreign matters in his own inimitable way:

"We English," said Mr. Podsnap, "are very proud of our Constitution, Sir. It was bestowed upon us by providence. No other country is so favoured as this country." "And other countries," said the foreign gentleman, "they do how?" "They do, Sir," said Mr. Podsnap, gravely shaking his head, "they do, I am sorry to be obliged to say it, as they do. For this

⁸ Ibid., 122-23.

island was blessed, Sir, to the direct exclusion ⁹ of such other countries as there may happen to be.'

Nor was this view confined to what might be called the intellectual lower orders. James Mill, having been told by someone that there were German philosophers of whom some people thought well, devoted a whole week to studying them, at the end of which he remarked: "I see well enough what poor Kant would be at."¹⁰

Although this self-congratulatory attitude could hardly be overemphasized, it was not the only reason responsible for the lapse of British interest in German literature, which occurred during the period between the late forties and the late sixties. One further cause is the fact that there was at about this time a definite lull in the literary activity of Germany. Thus, the Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review writes in 1847: "The presses of Germany continue, as usual, to pour forth abundant floods of printed sheets; the quantity seems even to be on the increase, but the quality declines in still more rapid proportion. The catalogues indicate the accustomed chaos of erudition, laborious technicality, and vapid 'belletristik'; but except in the department of lyric poetry, the dreary, cumbrous mass is scarcely enlightened by a ray of creative genius."¹¹ This excerpt is interesting for two reasons. First, because it is typical of Blackwood's attitude to German prose

⁹ Douglas Woodruff, "The Aristocratic Idea," in Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians, ed. B.B.C. (London, 1949), p. 283.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 283.

¹¹ "Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, XLVII(1847), 182, quoted in Lillie V. Hathaway, The Attitude of England and America Toward German Literature of the Mid-Nineteenth Century (Boston, 1935), p. 15-16.

around the middle of the century and, second, because it reflects its consistently favourable reception of German poetry.

It is a curious fact that while fiction and philosophy were bitterly attacked, a lively interest was shown in German poetry. Schiller, in particular, was greatly admired. From the year 1829 on, his popularity was assured. The publication, in 1842-43, of "The Poems and Ballads of Schiller" was followed, in 1844-45, by the appearance of those of Goethe. Uhland, though numerically not as well represented, was likewise highly lauded. It was undoubtedly due to the nature of these poems and their frankly didactic aims, that they held a constant appeal for British readers.

During the two decades preceding the Franco-Prussian War, however, even German poetry was neglected. Only six references appeared in that entire period. The most characteristic feature of the journal's criticism of things German in these years, was its note of self-conscious superiority. Blackwood's contributors were reiterating the old charges of immorality, long-windedness, and obscurity which had been levelled against German prose and philosophy in the forties. Now, they were especially fond of comparing German crudeness, lack of taste, and gluttony with the refined sensibilities and genteel sophistication of Englishmen.¹² And even the stuffiness of German homes, resulting from an alleged peculiarly German aversion to fresh air, and the unusual quantities of beer consumed by German students were among the things recounted by travellers¹³ to tax the credulousness of British ears.

¹² Anon., "My Latest Excursion," Blackwood's, XCVI(1864), 517.

¹³ Anon., "A Wanderer's Letter II," Blackwood's, CXIX(1876), 577.

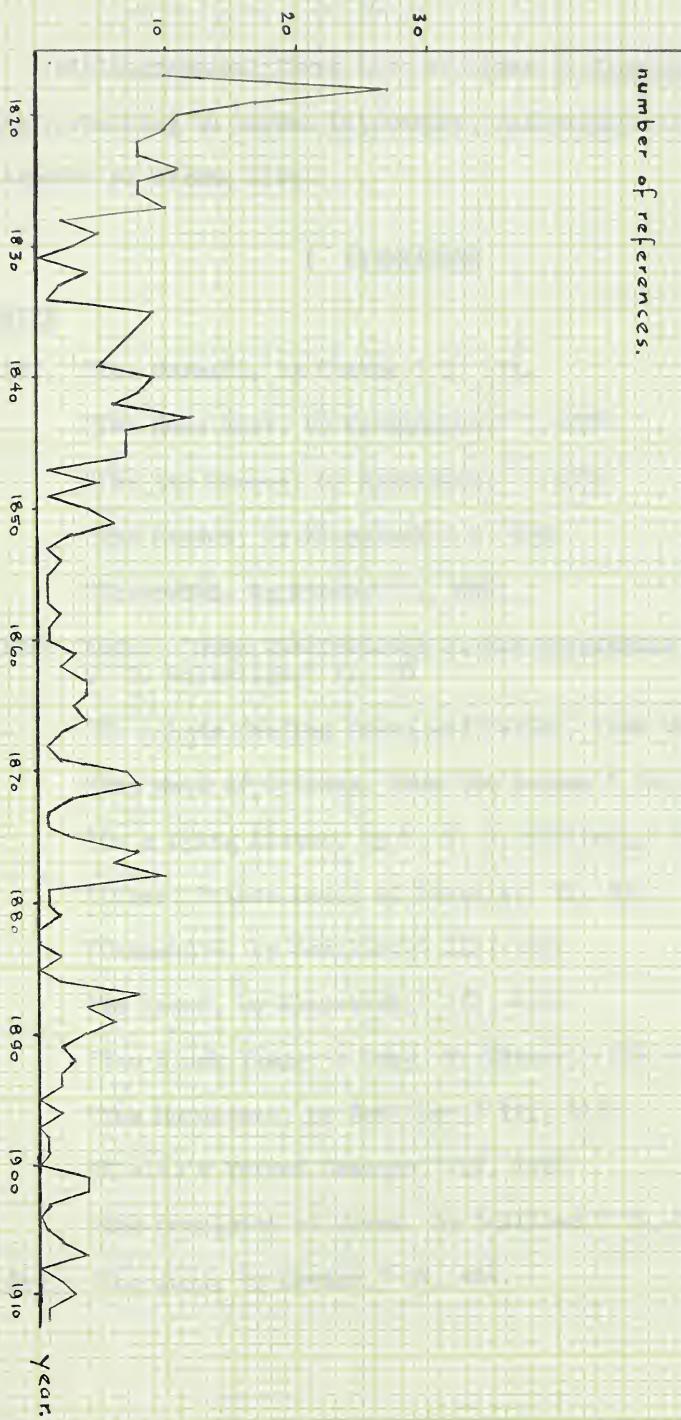
It was only after the Franco-Prussian War, that a general change in attitude became evident. In one of the few articles which do not deal with German militarism, a reviewer quotes Börne to the effect that it was Germany which "first started those great ideas which have been utilized and set going by other nations," and that she was the "headspring" of all those innovations--gunpowder, the printing-press and the Reformation--which have changed the face of the world.¹⁴ Leaving the question open whether this is really true, the author does admit, however, that Germany "is the undoubted begetter of one of the sublimest and most beneficent ideas of modern times: a German word,--the *Humanitäts-idee*. In other words, the conception of humanity as a great moral and intellectual whole, and the contemplation of individual culture as a complete ensemble in harmony with such a conception."

As far as literature was concerned, the last three decades of the century show a general revival of interest on the part of Blackwood's. In the realm of poetry, it was Heine who led the field. The publication, between 1877 and 1878, of the "Translations From Heine," as well as an article on the poet, which appeared in 1877, attempt a reassessment of his work. Two important translations of dramatic works--the Second Part of Faust (1886) and Wallenstein's Camp (1892)--an article on "Recent German Fiction" (1893), and essays evaluating the music of such favourites as Mozart and Handel, further testify to the renewed interest taken by Britain in German culture.

This interest, however, was to be short-lived. Germany had

¹⁴ Anon., Rev. of Quinet's *Creation*, Blackwood's, CXI(1872), 206.

within a short period attained a key position in world politics and Britain, seeing her pre-eminence threatened by the rising power of Germany, began to pay close attention to her chief rival. Naturally, her concern turned to military and economic matters, and articles on these topics now took in the pages of Blackwood's the place of literature, philosophy, art, and music. Finally, the beginning of World War I brought to an end in an atmosphere of hostility the interest in German literature and culture in general, which had begun nearly a hundred years earlier in a spirit of enthusiasm.



Graphical Representation of
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APPENDIX

Bibliographical Check List of Items in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine Pertaining to German Literature, Philosophy, Art, Music, and other Aspects of German Life.

I LITERATURE

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